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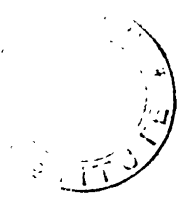
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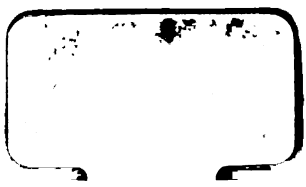
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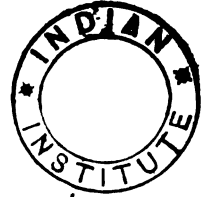
Indian Institute, Oxford.





7
1905

THE
NEW DISPENSATION
AND THE



SÁDHÁRAN BRÁHMO SAMÁJ

BY

PANDIT SIVANÁTH SÁSTRI. M.A.,
MISSIONARY, SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ.

"Satyam eva Jayate."
Truth alone triumphs.

"Brahma kripahi kevalam."
God's mercy alone availeth.

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PREFACE.

I undertook to write this little work on the points of difference between the New Dispensation and the Sâdhâran Brahmo Samâj after much thought and prayer. I hesitated long to consider, whether a work like this would not be something like pouring water on burning oil, in the present state of troubled feelings amongst my Brahmo brethren of this Southern Presidency. I took time to think and pray over the matter well, before I gave way to a strong sense of duty. This duty seems to be imperative on me for three reasons (1) First, many of my friends here are sincerely anxious to know the points of difference between the two Samâjes, for, in the absence of such knowledge they feel, that they are not in a position to form any judgment of their own, as regards the true causes of disunion. (2) Secondly, there prevails a general ignorance in the minds of the public, with respect to certain facts connected with the history of the Brahmo movement itself. (3) Thirdly, no clear and definite statement of the views and principles of the Sâdhâran Brahmo Samâj has yet been made to the reading public, and the necessity of such a statement has been in my mind for a long time. In undertaking this work in hand I felt that I would be treading on delicate ground; where the slightest party-bias would cause serious deviations from truth and would also expose me to the charge of injustice and falsehood. Hence was the necessity for earnest prayer. However, I have tried to state the truth as I know it and believe it, never consciously departing from it. That is all I could do. It is not to be hoped, however, that all I

have narrated or opined is altogether free from mistake or fault or that it will give entire satisfaction to all parties concerned; but let the reader, specially my Brahma readers of this Presidency, be well assured, that the following pages contain nothing written with a view to mislead them or pervert their judgment.

In matters, not directly coming under my personal experience, or where I do not depend upon recorded authority, I have taken care to guard my assertions by modifying words and clauses. Yet I do not hope, that I shall altogether escape the charge of mis-statement or inaccuracy, chiefly arising from ignorance or misinformation. If any such errors of statement are pointed out, I shall be the first to give them publicity, and to correct my statements in the second edition, if this book ever reaches a second reprint. But I will not take any notice, let it be distinctly understood, of any vague, general and undefined remarks, such as, "the book is full of mis-statements," "these are false and mendacious charges," "they are concoctions of malice and personal animosity," and so forth. I specially mention this, as it has been an old and well-known practice with the *Sunday Mirror* to try to throw suspicion over the statements of its adversaries, by vague and undefined expressions. Whosoever will kindly undertake to criticize my statements, let him do it distinctly and pointedly, showing the exact place, exact sentence, and exact expression.

In all the extracts, the italics are mine, and in quoting them I have selected only those portions that seemed necessary to me. Let those, however, who consider any of these extracts misquoted or misinterpreted show the correct meanings. No vague assertions to that effect will be taken into consideration. Only one thing I have undertaken to translate for myself. It is the prayer from the *Dharma-tatwa*, where Mr. Sen hurls curses on his enemies in

imitation of Mahomet. I have taken care to make the translation as literal and faithful as possible. It would not do, for the *Sunday Mirror* to say, that this translation is a mistranslation. Let it point out the exact sentence and expression, where it thinks Mr. Sen's meaning has not been brought out.

My original intention was to publish a pamphlet on our differences, but upon second thought I felt the necessity of giving an introductory historical sketch of the whole movement, which would be quite new to many readers and without which the exact position of the contending parties cannot be properly understood. This, along with the discussion of the several points of difference swelled the bulk of the pamphlet into a book. To the well-educated and advanced class of my readers, many of my remarks and arguments, for instance those on the difference between *authority* and *independence*, and the doctrine of great-men. &c., will appear quite trite and redundant, but they are intended for a class of Brahma readers, whose standard of education does not come up so high, and who absolutely require the several links of an argument before they can apprehend the ultimate truth.

The reader is not to suppose that these are the only points of our difference with the New Dispensation. In fact not an issue of the *New Dispensation* or of the *Sunday Mirror* comes out, but there are some startling departures from our Brahma principles. I have touched here only the leading points and must refer him to Miss Collet's article headed "The Brahma Samâj versus the New Dispensation" in the November number of the *Contemporary Review*.

I should not here forget to tender my thanks to a number of friends of this city for having gone through the book with me, and for having helped me in correcting the proof-sheets.

With these prefatory remarks, I leave this book in the hands of the public, with this satisfaction, that I have done, what it was in my power to do, within a short time and with limited sources of information, to vindicate truth and to defend the principles of my Church. As for the book itself, the reader will find in it many mistakes, arising from the author's imperfect knowledge of English and also the great hurry with which it was got through the Press. I hope he will kindly overlook them.

MADRAS.

10th December, 1881. }

S. N. SASTRI.



THE HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The origin and progress of the movement.—

The movement was first formally inaugurated by the late Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, in the year 1830, by the opening, in Calcutta, of a prayer-hall, where men of all creeds and denominations might assemble for the purpose of worshipping the one true God. This formal act was brought about by a long course of previous preparation, connected with the Raja's personal history. Through a long series of years he had been pursuing this one aim as it were. At the early age of sixteen, when he was a perfect stranger to the English language, and just learning the Persian and the Arabic, his strong and vigorous mind was first awakened to religious truth, and his eyes were for the first time opened to the errors and superstitions of his country-men. His altered convictions led him into a controversy with his father, it is said, on the subject of idolatry, which resulted in his expulsion from home. This parental severity, which would have cowed down the spirit of an ordinary child, only served to stimulate his zeal and prompted him to undertake a perilous journey across the Himalayas, to Thibet, probably to study Buddhism in its home; where also, it appears, he roused a host of enemies against himself by his controversies with the superstitious Buddhistic priests. After a few years' stay abroad he returned to India and began to prosecute his Sanskrit studies at Benares. At this time a reconciliation was effected between himself and his father, who, it seems,

persuaded him to accept a secular employment under the English Company, as sheristadar of a Collector of Revenue. Whilst engaged in the unusually arduous duties of this office, he found time to acquire a tolerable knowledge of the English language, which he improved in after life. Nor did he forget his chosen and favourite theme. He bestowed all the leisure hours, which he could snatch from his pressing duties, to religious discussions, with men of various creeds and sects whom his genius and influence drew around him. At last the opportunity, that he seems to have been seeking for a long time, did offer itself; and he retired from his secular work, to settle down in Calcutta, probably with the object of pushing forward those enquiries that were nearest to his heart. He already knew the Koran in its original; and he now consigned himself to the study of the Bible, and, with a view to read it in its original languages, went through Hebrew and Greek. From this time dates the real origin of the movement. The conclusion to which he was driven, after these researches, was, that the worship of the one true God was enjoined in all the religious scriptures of the world, and formed a common basis. This point he urged in all his publications, always basing his conclusions on texts from the scriptures of his adversaries. As on the one hand, by these earnest efforts, he drew around him a small body of supporters, mostly men who had received a little Western culture, he raised on the other hand, a host of enemies amongst all classes, specially amongst the Hindus and the Christians. He was once mobbed in the streets of Calcutta and for sometime his life was in danger. For the Hindus he published translations of the Vedant, showing the spurious character and the comparatively modern origin of the idolatrous system, and to the Christians, he showed his warm appreciation of, and deep admiration for, Jesus and the Bible, by publishing his celebrated tract called, "The

Precepts of Jesus—guide to peace and happiness.” Whilst engaged in these religious controversies he was not idle in other respects. His gifted pen was also busy in advocating the cause of his country-women, in exposing the horrors of the *suttee*, in proving the necessity and usefulness of English education, in getting up memorials and agitations for the defence of popular rights, and also in vividly representing the superstitious tyranny of many social customs.

After all these struggles and controversies, the first house of prayer for un-sectarian and monotheistic worship was opened in Calcutta, in the year 1830. That year also witnessed the suppression of the inhuman custom of *suttee*. The idea of forming a sect or of leaving a Church behind him was not in the Raja's mind. He simply aimed at raising a common platform, where all sects and denominations would meet for worshipping the Common Father. But the ritual and the forms and accompaniments of service were kept strictly Hindu, which consisted in chanting the mantras of the Vedas by Brahmins, from an adjoining room, where Sudras would not be allowed, followed by singing of hymns and exposition of passages from the *Upanishads*. The leading feature of these hymns, composed by the Raja and his friends, was a solemn and earnest call to remembrance, the remembrance of Him, “who alone was the truth, every thing else being vanity.” Like John the Baptist of old he tried to awaken his people to repentance and to the thought of the infinite Being. He called them to think of Him, but did not throw much light on the nature of spiritual worship or the mysteries of communion with Him,—which task was left to his worthy successor the venerable Maharshi Debendranath Tagore. Soon after the opening of the Prayer Hall, the Rajah left for England; where, to the great sorrow of his friends and admirers, he died an untimely death.

Accession of D. N. Tagore.—Unsupported by the mighty arm of its founder the Samâj began to languish from this time. Its early supporters, drawn together chiefly by the brilliant genius and attractive personality of the Rajah began to fall off. During the next seven or eight years it was nominally kept up, however, by the noble devotion of its pious minister, Pandit Ram Chandra Vidyabagish, one of the first disciples of the Rajah, and also by the open-handed munificence of the late Dwarkanath Tagore, the father of Debendranath Tagore, the second great leader of the movement. The accession of Babu Debendranath to the Samâj in the year 1838, was the cause of the stirring of new life in the movement. Sprung from one of the wealthiest families of Calcutta, and nursed in the lap of fortune, he, like many other scions of noble families of that time, was pursuing a career of luxury and pleasure, when it pleased Providence to arrest the tide, and turn his eyes to the inner cravings of his soul. By a variety of circumstances, quite unique and singular in their character, he was suddenly impressed, at the age of twenty, with the vanity of all earthly pleasures, and began a deep earnest and spiritual search into his own being and its wants and aspirations. As a consequence, his steps were led towards the Brahma Samâj. It was not long before his gifted eye could discern, how far the movement had degenerated both in point of doctrine and practical usefulness. He forthwith set himself to work to give it life and consistency. He started the "Tatwabodhini Sabha" (the Truth-teaching Society), in the year 1839 for the dissemination of religious truths. He extended the operations of this society by the establishment of several schools at different places, with a view to train up young men in the knowledge of truth; and before a few years had elapsed, he further strengthened the cause of the society by the publication of a monthly journal, which under the editorship of an able writer, soon

rose to become the best vernacular journal of its times. This journal, called the *Tatwabodhini Patrica*, still exists.

Along with the thoughts of these practical works, there were other thoughts of a deeper and more spiritual nature working in his mind. He found the Samâj as Rajah Ram Mohun Roy had left it, a mere platform, where people of different creeds used to assemble week after week to listen to the discourses and hymns. Men by joining it pledged nothing, incurred nothing, and lost nothing. Many who attended these services were idolaters at home, and in fact knew not what the spiritual worship of the one true God meant. He instantly applied himself to remove this spiritual want. He bound himself and his friends by a solemn covenant introduced in the year 1843, which, besides clearly laying down and defining the attributes of the Deity, enjoined, in the first place, a vow to cultivate a habit of daily prayer, secondly, a vow to give up idolatry. He was the first to sign this covenant; and many were the privations and bitter the persecutions he had to suffer on account of this resolution. He describes in one of his lectures, how he would wander away from his house, in sun and rain, on those days when the great goddess Durga would be worshipped by his parents and relations, simply to avoid taking part, in the least, in any idolatrous ceremony.

After the introduction of this covenant, hundreds of new members were induced to sign it during the next six or seven years, and many branch Samâjes were also established in many mofussil stations. Whilst the society founded by Raja Ram Mohun Roy, was thus fast growing into a Church and a community, under its spiritually gifted leader, another change of a serious nature was imminent. It was nothing short of giving up the *Vedas* as infallible religious scripture. Up to this time, the

Vedas had been tacitly acknowledged as the authority in religious matters. But since the establishment of the Tatwabodhini Sabha, and the revival of religious inquiry, the attention of the leading members began to be closely directed to this part of their creed. Many intelligent men amongst them, notably the editor of the *Tatwabodhini*, Babu Akshay Kumar Dutt, urged the necessity of investigating the foundations of this belief. Accordingly, Babu Debendranath Tagore deputed four young Brahmins, at his own cost, to proceed to Benares and to collect and read the four Vedas, with a view to be able to correctly expound them after their return. The upshot of these fresh researches was, that the infallibility of the Vedas could not be any longer maintained. The Vedas were finally given up, leaving the creed of the Brahmo Samâj pure and simple Theism. After this great and important change, Babu Debendranath proceeded to revise the articles of his faith and to lay down those fundamental principles upon which the Adi Samâj at present stands. He also reframed a theistic covenant for the acceptance of his disciples, and published a remarkable book, called "*Brahma Dharma*, or the "religion of the one true God", the best monument of his religious genius. It consists of theistic selections from passages of the *Upanishads*, with his own commentaries. After finishing these arduous duties, and leaving the Samâj in a flourishing and prosperous condition, Babu Debendranath retired for a short time to the mountains, to refresh his spiritual energies by study and meditation.

Accession of K. C. Sen.—A number of young men had been drawn to the Samâj in the meantime, and one of them was a man of remarkable ability, destined to further revolutionize the Church and raise it into a power. This was Babu Keshub Chunder Sen. He joined the Samâj in the year 1859. Upon his return to the plains, Babu

Debendranath was much struck by the earnestness and ability of young Keshub, and at once accepted him as a friend and co-adjutor. A deep and almost filial attachment sprang up between them, and henceforth they jointly began to plan and adopt several important measures, which further developed the reforming tendencies of the Church. The reader has been already informed, how by the imposition of the covenant Babu Debendranath bound himself to shun idolatry, and how he suffered many privations on account of this resolution. But a further act of reform in this direction was now initiated. He celebrated in the year 1861, the marriage of his eldest daughter according to unidolatrous rites, and also prepared a Code of domestic ceremonies according to the principles of theism. Side by side with these acts of reform, two institutions, intended for the religious culture of the younger generation, were brought into existence. The first was the *Brahmo School*, and the second, the *Sangat Sabha*; the former being a system of weekly lectures, both in Bengali and English, on theological and moral subjects, the latter being a spiritual Fraternity of the younger members of the Samâj, where important questions of doctrine and practice were freely discussed. It was in this society that those convictions were first formed, which have afterwards borne such signal fruits in the lives of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen and many of his colleagues.

From the beginning, the venerable chief of the Samâj reposed the greatest possible confidence in Babu Keshub Chunder Sen and his party. Mr. Sen was appointed minister of the Samâj in 1862, and the management of the affairs of the Samâj, the editorial charge of the *Tatwabodhini*, &c. were all left in the hands of the younger party.

Things continued in this happy state of intimate friendship and implicit trust for a few years. There were progress

and enthusiasm visible on every side. The house of Babu Debendranath became a general rendezvous for the Brahmos of Calcutta. Their anniversary meetings at his house, their fraternal greetings, and warm exchanges of love and friendship on those occasions, and above all the rich hospitality of the noble host himself, will be long remembered by those who ever shared them.

But causes of quarrel and ultimate separation between the older and the younger parties were near at hand. The party of Mr. Sen were rapidly developing their convictions on all social and moral questions, and were eager to launch into a career of bolder and more uncompromising reform. The question of caste early began to press against their conscience, and many of them discarded the Brahminical thread, the badge of caste. Babu Debendranath, out of his great love and respect for the progressive party, so far sympathised with their aspirations, that he himself discarded the thread, and appointed a number of thread-less ministers, from the younger party, in the place of the old thread-bearing ones.

But this perhaps was the last straw that broke the camel's back. The older members of the Samâj, wedded to their conservative notions, had before this begun to raise their voice of marmur, and to whisper into the ears of their chief, dark and dismal forebodings about the future of the movement, to which, this sudden and unprovoked degradation of the old ministers added a graver cause of complaint. It was felt as an injustice by them as well as by the disgraced ministers. When these clamours were increasing in strength and loudness in the body itself, the younger party further committed themselves, in the year 1864, by an act of daring reform, which threw the whole Hindu community into a fever-heat of sensation. It was nothing less than getting up a marriage between persons

of different castes. This popular displeasure aided and aggravated by the complaints of the disgraced ministers and the elder members, at last unsettled the mind of Babu Debendranath Tagore. His mind was seized with a sudden fear,—that, perhaps he was treading on a dangerous ground, by placing such implicit confidence in young and inexperienced spirits,—that, perhaps he was making himself a party in violating the principles laid down by Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, which it was his duty to uphold as the sole surviving trustee of the Samâj,—that, perhaps by countenancing these go-ahead reforms he was placing an impassable gulf between the Samâj and the Hindu community at large,—that, perhaps his long-cherished dreams of preaching Brahmoism in a national and acceptable form were about to be rudely dispelled,—that, perhaps for the sake of a number of inexperienced youths he was alienating the sympathies of a large class of older and more tried friends. These doubts and misgivings, probably intensified by dark suspicions about the motives of the aspiring and ambitious leader of the younger party, shook his former confidence to a considerable extent, and he began to revoke, one after another, all the important powers with which he had invested their leaders. Their thread-less ministers were suddenly set aside; the *Tatvabodhini* was taken out of their hands; and they were made to resign all the posts of trust they occupied in the Samâj. For a time the junior members struggled to maintain a footing in the Church, by appealing to constitutional principles; but all efforts proving unavailing, they were finally compelled to leave the parent Samâj in the year 1866 and go out to found a separate Church of their own.

Before we take final leave of the Adi Brahmô Samâj and of its venerable leader, Babu Debendranath Tagore, let me briefly indicate the glorious mission that this saint-like man has, under the guidance of Providence,

performed for the furtherance of the cause. Before his time, Brahmoism had existed as a mere matter of speculative thought. It was he who gave it the attractions of life, by teaching the secrets of prayer and spiritual communion. It was he who taught the Brahmos to worship God, as the "soul of their souls," and the "life of their lives," and in his own devout person he showed the way. We still vividly recollect the day, when we hung with profound respect and fond filial trust, upon every word that fell from his venerable lips, and when, a single sparkling glance of his eyes awakened strange emotions in our breasts, and made us feel that God was near. His deeply meditative nature, his warm and over-flowing heart, his exquisitely poetic temperament, and above all, the saint-like purity of his life, all combined to make his Brahmoism a living reality, and to mark him out, even to this day, as the highest type of a truly devout character amongst us. Not unacquainted with the English language, he has, however, drawn the principal inspiration of his religious life from the *Upanishads*, the old spiritual records of our forefathers, and his love for these books is very great. Every word of these texts, to use his own expression, is associated with some fact of his spiritual experience or other, and naturally calls forth the deepest emotions of his heart. He is intensely national in his sympathies; and his mode of propagation also is in strict accordance with this spirit.

This is also the place for giving the reader an idea of the principal doctrines, that the Adi-Brahmo Samâj under the guidance of the gifted genius of Babu Debendranath, had developed during the period of the 25 years, preceding the secession of the progressive party, which took place in the year 1866. I shall simply extract a sketch of these doctrines, from "A Brief Survey," published by the Adi Brahmo Samâj in 1868, and also the present covenant of the Adi Samâj.

- I. "The book of nature and intuition form the basis of the Brahmic faith.
- II. Although the Brahmos do not consider any book written by man, the basis of their religion, yet they do accept with respect and pleasure any truth contained in any book.
- III. The Brahmos believe that the religious condition of man is progressive like the other parts of his condition in this world.
- IV. They believe that the fundamental doctrines of their religion are at the basis of every religion followed by man.
- V. They believe in the existence of one Supreme God,—a God endowed with a distinct personality, moral attributes equal to his nature and intelligence befitting the Governor of the Universe; and worship Him—Him alone. They do not believe in his incarnation.
- VI. They believe in the immortality and progressive state of the soul and declare that there is a state of conscious existence succeeding life in this world and supplementary to it, as respects the action of the universal moral government.
- VII. They believe that atonement is the only way to salvation. They do not recognize any other mode of reconciliation to the offended but loving Father.
- VIII. They pray for spiritual welfare and believe in the efficacy of such prayers.
- IX. They believe in the Providential care of the Divine Father.
- X. They avow that love towards Him and performing the works He loveth constitute His worship.
- XI. They recognise the necessity of public worship, but do not believe, that they cannot hold communion with the great Father without resorting to any fixed place at any fixed time. They maintain that we can adore Him at any time and at any place, provided that time and that place are calculated to compose and direct the mind towards Him.
- XII. They do not believe in pilgrimages but declare that holiness can only be attained by elevating and purifying the mind.

- XIII.** They do not perform any rites and ceremonies, or believe in penances as instrumental in obtaining the grace of God. They declare that moral righteousness, the gaining of wisdom, Divine contemplation, charity, and the cultivation of devotional feelings are their rites and ceremonies. They further say, govern and regulate your feelings, discharge your duties to God and to man, and you will gain everlasting blessedness; purify your heart, cultivate devotional feelings, and you will see Him who is unseen.
- XIV.** Theoretically there is no distinction of caste among the Brahmōs. They declare that we are all the children of God, and, therefore, must consider ourselves as brothers and sisters."

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THE COVENANT OF THE ADI SAMĀJ.

—◆—

- (a.) "God alone existed in the beginning, and He created this Universe.
- (b.) He is intelligent, infinite, benevolent, eternal, governor of the Universe, all-knowing, omni-present, refuge of all, devoid of limbs, immutable, alone, without a second, all-powerful, self-existent, and beyond comparison.
- (c.) By worshipping Him and Him alone we can attain the highest good in this life and in the next.
- (d.) To love Him and to do the works He loves, constitute His worship.

By declaring my belief in the above mentioned four fundamental principles of Brahmoism, I accept it as my faith.

1. By loving Him, who is the creator, the preserver, and the destroyer of the world, who is the only source of good in this life and in the next, the all-knowing, the omni-present, the all-merciful, the formless, the alone without a second, by loving Him, and by doing the works He loves, I shall try to be His worshipper.

2. I shall not worship any created thing or being as God.

3. Except when incapacitated by disease, or accident or misfortune, I shall devote some time, every day, to the contemplation of God.

4. I shall try to keep myself engaged in good works.

5. I shall try to shun those acts that are wrong.

6. If through ignorance I ever commit anything that is wrong, with repentance I shall try to return from the evil course.

7. I shall annually contribute something to the Brahmo Samâj, towards the propagation of Brahmoism.

As far as the above-mentioned principles were concerned, there was no difference between the older and the younger parties at the time when the first schism took place. All their differences mainly hinged upon two points;—first, the practical renunciation of Caste; second, the recognition of constitutional principles in matters of church government. Some efforts were actually made by Mr. Sen's party, on the eve of their separation, for the introduction of the principles of representative government in Church matters. I specially ask the reader to bear in mind these facts for they will be useful for purposes of comparison, when we come to the history of the second schism.

The Adi Samâj though still existing is not so powerful as it was at one time. The venerable Maharshi Debendranath Tagore has retired since last ten or twelve years from all active work, leaving the affairs of the Samâj to a committee of management, of which his esteemed friend and co-adjutor Babu Rajnarain Bose is the president, and one of his own sons, the secretary. The weekly Divine Service of the Samâj, the establishment connected with the *Tatwabodhini* and similar works, are all kept up by his endowments. The large number of members, who at one time signed the covenant, have quietly disappeared amongst the mass of idolatrous Hindus, and many of them do not now take even a faint interest in the cause they once advocated. The old patriarch, in the meanwhile,

is sunk in his deep devotions, spending his time either in his favourite haunts on the Himalayas, or in other retired recesses, far removed from the din and bustle of social existence. The interests of his health, as well as his anxiety to spend the last days of his life in quiet repose and undisturbed communion with God, have necessitated this retirement on his part; and who will grudge him this well-earned repose at the close of a worthy and eminently useful life! But whilst taking leave of this venerable father, I cannot conceal the conviction, that it was an evil hour, when he thought it fit to interpose his authority to check the tide of growing thought and progress in the Samâj, thereby shutting out *life*, and dooming his own Church to inevitable decline. May Heaven's chosen blessings rest on his revered head!

The rise and progress of the B. Samâj of India.—I now come to another very important period of the history of the Samâj—including the rise and progress of the Brahmo Samâj of India, *i. e.*, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen's Church. But before I proceed to narrate the facts and incidents connected with the origin and progress of this institution, a short personal history of the man, whose genius and ability once shed so much lustre on the whole movement, and whose wild eccentricities are now dragging it down in the estimation of the public, seems to be necessary.—Born in one of the well-to-do and influential families of Calcutta, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen received in his earlier years, the best education that could be given, in those days, to a young man of parts. From his early childhood, he was distinguished by a gentle and loveable shyness of disposition, a cool determination of will, a masterly faculty of imitation, and warm aspiration after everything good and useful. As a boy he was a leader of boys; and was known amongst his friends as a good speaker and writer of English. It seems he early came in contact

with Christian Missionaries, from whom he imbibed a deep veneration for the Bible and for the character of Jesus Christ. This sentiment in him, has grown with growing experience, as will be manifest from the subsequent narrative. At about the age of 20, when he was earnestly struggling with the temptations that beset his youth, leaning principally upon prayer, he chanced to meet with a copy of the lectures of Babu Rajnarain Bose, the present president of the Adi Brahma Samâj, and was so much strack with, and captivated by, the simplicity and purity of the faith of the Brahma Samâj, that he went and joined it in the year 1859, as already referred to.

From the very time of his admission, his influence began to be felt in the Samâj. All the important steps that were jointly taken by himself, and his venerable colleague, have been already enumerated; and only a few more things in which he was more directly concerned require to be specially mentioned.

His lectures in connection with the Brahma School have been already noticed, but apart from these, he issued several tracts and pamphlets, illustrating the principles of the Samâj, and defending it against the attacks of several Christian adversaries.

It was in the year 1862, that he was elevated to the pulpit of the Samâj by Babu Debendranath, as minister. This year he further signalized by taking a bold step, which, taking the circumstances of those days into consideration, required considerable courage on his part. He induced his young wife to come forward to dine at the house of Babu Debendranath Tagore, who belonged to an excommunicated race of Brahmins. This act on his part led to his temporary expulsion by his uncle, from his home and family. But the principal instrument of spiritual culture, during these days, which powerfully moulded the convictions

of the rising generation of Brahmos, including Mr. Sen, and which gave the Samáj its first batch of workers, who subsequently carried the light of the new faith far and wide over the whole length and breadth of the land, was the *Sangat Sabha*, already alluded to in the preceding narrative. It was in this little society, which held its sittings at Mr. Sen's house, and of which he was the presiding genius, that all doctrinal and practical questions were freely discussed, and the nucleus of a Brahma Mission was first formed; Mr. Sen himself leaving his secular employment and setting the example. The enthusiasm of the members of this Society grew stronger and stronger every day, till at last, it brought them into collision with the older section of the Samáj as already described. Their first objects of attack were caste and the Brahminical thread. Many of its members came forward to discard them publicly, and also influenced Babu Debendranath Tagore to accept it as a principle of action for the whole Church. The reader already knows the history of this question, so I pass it over, to review some very important measures that Babu Keshub Chander Sen and his party adopted at about the year 1864. This year witnessed the celebration of the first inter-marriage, which, as noticed before, widened the gulf between the older and the younger sections of the community. The Brahma Mission Office was also opened during this year. A number of devout and earnest souls, actuated by the spirit of the first apostles of Christianity, left their secular employments, and came forward to preach and propagate their faith all over the country. Their sufferings and privations at the first stage of their missionary life, were very great. From comfortable and easy circumstances, many of them came down to want and poverty, and had, on many occasions, to go without even the bare necessities of life. Yet their zeal and enthusiasm for their cause was unabated; and, let it be here gratefully recorded,

that it is chiefly through the untiring zeal and earnest devotion of these men, that Brahmoism has made so much progress in this country. Along with the organisation of the Mission Office, Mr. Sen also established an educational institution, called the "Calcutta College," where some of these Missionaries did excellent service as instructors of youth, whilst others were entrusted with the management of the papers, *Indian Mirror*, and the *Dharmatawa*, the latter a monthly journal started in this year, and also of the Printing Press, which the party managed to get by this time.

The outlines of a strong and powerful party were thus laid down, even before the differences between the older and the younger sections of the community, were yet discernible. We also read in the papers of those days, some accounts of the proceedings of a Representative Council, which Mr. Sen tried to organise. This Council consisted of representatives nominated and deputed by the provincial Samâjes, to meet and discuss questions affecting the general interests of the whole body. A number of meetings of this Council were held, at about this time, after which it seems to have quietly collapsed.

The adoption of these measures by the younger party, even before their formal separation, clearly indicate, that causes were secretly at work, which were fast hastening matters to that critical pass, when an open and formal rupture could no longer be avoided. The apprehended rupture did at last come, and in the way illustrated in the previous history. The progressive party publicly declared their secession, by the organisation of a new society, called the Brahma Samâj of India, in the year 1866.

After the establishment of this society, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen was left uncontrolled and free to pursue his reforming career; and signs of life and progress were visible on every side. The number of provincial Churches

began to multiply, under the new system of missionary visits; many earnest and sincere souls were drawn to the Samâj, who joined it in the face of much persecution; widow-marriages and inter-marriages became frequent in this little community; and a large number of families became excommunicated on account of their renunciation of caste and idolatry.

Nor were the reformers less mindful of their women. That subject had attracted their attention, even before the schism; for at their instance, it appears, seats were once provided in the Adi Brahma Samâj Hall for the wives and daughters of the Brahmans. But this branch of useful work was duly and earnestly taken up along with other measures of reform. A ladies' prayer-meeting was organized in the year 1865, where Mr. Sen delivered some of his excellent discourses to the other sex.

The progressive party, after their separation, directed their attention chiefly to three things; (1) the publication of a book of theistic texts from all religious scriptures, (2) the building of a Prayer-Hall, (3) moving the legislature to legalize their reformed marriages. The book of texts was published in due time; subscriptions were opened for the Prayer-Hall; and steps were also taken for ascertaining legal opinion on their system of marriages. The particular history of this movement I reserve for future treatment.

The Brahma Mandir or the Prayer Hall of Mr. Sen's party, which is now-a-days called the "Tabernacle of the New Dispensation," was opened in August 1869. Remarkable spiritual developments had taken place in the mean time. During the period intervening between the day of secession and the opening of the Mandir, the Brahmans of Mr. Sen's party, had come in contact with the *Bhakti* school of thought, so prevalent amongst the *Vaishnavas*

of Bengal, and had been charmed to see the fervent religious enthusiasm of this sect. Many of them became admirers of their peculiar forms of religious exercise, and many of their popular hymns, with slight modifications, were adopted in Brahma religious meetings. The introduction of these *Vaishnava* hymns, induced a sudden expansion of religious enthusiasm. The sense of sin and human unworthiness was more strongly impressed than ever on the minds of the Brahmōs, and a spirit of lowliness was suddenly developed in many minds. But this sudden spiritual expansion also led to certain objectionable practices, on the part of some members of the party, which have found permanent place in the history of the Brahma Samâj, under the head of the "*Man-worship Agitation.*"

As early as the year 1866, Mr. Sen delivered a lecture on "Great men," explaining the light in which he viewed them. The following extracts will give the reader an idea of Mr. Sen's doctrine:—

"Great men are sent by God into the world to benefit mankind; They are His apostles and missionaries, who bring to us glad tidings from heaven; and in order that they may effectually accomplish their errand they are endowed by Him with requisite power and talents. They are created with a nature superior to that of others, which is at once the testimonial of their apostleship and the guarantee of their success. * * * * *

"They are ordained and sanctified as prophets at their birth." * * He puts in their very constitution something super-human and divine. Hence their greatness and superiority.

"The fact is, as I have already said, he (the great man) is both divine and human, he is both God and man. He is a God-man. He is an incarnation of God. Yes, I look upon a prophet as a divine incarnation, in this sense, that he is the spirit of God manifest in human flesh. In the economy of Providence they are special Dis-pensations."

I reserve a detailed discussion of this doctrine for the second chapter of this treatise, and hasten to relate the

leading incidents connected with the historical portion of my narrative.

Soon after this formal enunciation of the doctrine of "Great men" by Mr. Sen, tendencies were visible amongst a number of his followers, to apply it to his own person, and to pay him almost super-human honors. Persons were seen prostrating themselves at his feet, praying to him for intercession with God on their behalf, addressing him as "Lord" "Saviour" "the sinner's way" &c., some besmearing their heads with the dust of his feet, others applying it to their tongues. I need hardly say, that such practices gave great offence to a large section of the Brahmo community. Two of his missionaries, who were eye-witnesses of these proceedings, left him, and raised the standard of revolt. Their revelations filled the whole Church with intense agitation. The Brahmo Samâj became an object of public ridicule; sneers and taunts were heaped upon it from every side; the body itself became a scene of internal dissensions; harsh words were freely interchanged by the contending parties; many brethren of weak faith left the Church on these pretexts; the course of uninterrupted progress, which marked the career of the Progressive party, during the preceding four or five years, was suddenly checked; and the whole movement, which had been, before this time, steadily rising in public esteem, received a terrible shock, from which it has not completely recovered ever since. But it was not long before peace was once more established within the Church itself. In a published letter, Mr. Sen disclaimed all sympathy with the above-mentioned objectionable proceedings of a number of his followers, and gave the reason of his non-interference with their conduct on such occasions. The explanation did not give universal satisfaction; but those of us who still felt themselves unable to agree with him, in the matter of his principle of non-interference, were, however, satisfied

as regards his motives, and exonerated him from all complicity in the objectionable practices. Peace and friendship were again restored; and the work of the Samâj went on smoothly as before.

Mr. Sen opened the new Prayer Hall of the Progressive party in August 1869, as already stated, and left for England in the beginning of 1870;—where he staid for some months, earning great distinction for himself, and considerable influence for his Church. “On Mr. Sen’s return to India he immediately began to put in practice, some of the hints he had gathered in England.” A family boarding house, for purposes of religious instruction and spiritual culture of its members, was established under the name of the *Bharat Asram*, or the *Indian Hermitage*,—where a number of Brahmo families were invited to come and reside. He also organised a secular Society, under the name of the “Indian Reform Association,” which was divided into five sections, and undertook much useful work.

A Female Normal School for training up lady-teachers was started under the auspices of this Association, and several adult young ladies, mostly wives, daughters, and sisters, of the Brahmos, were admitted as pupils. This institution did its good work for some time, but is no longer existent. A temperance journal was also issued from the temperance section of this society, which also died in course of time. There were several other institutions, such as industrial schools, night schools for the labouring classes &c., started and maintained for some time, which also came to untimely ends. This society dormant and extinct for several years, is now and then called into a sort of spasmodic existence, and seems to be nominally existing at present, in the shape of a public school, originally started by others and subsequently placed

under the control of this Society, of a weekly pice-paper in Bengali, and perhaps of few other things, such as little monthly charities &c.

The two most memorable events of this period were (1) the Female Emancipation movement, (2) the passing of the Act III of 1872. The former was chiefly confined to Calcutta. The facts connected with this movement are these :—An influential section of the Brahmo community of Calcutta, began to entertain at this time, quite other views of female education and female liberty, than what were advocated by Mr. Sen. They strongly objected against the "*Purdah system*" or the custom of compelling the ladies to sit behind screens, in the Brahmo *Mandir*, and demanded the privilege of sitting with their wives and daughters outside the screens, and among the rest of the congregation. This right was at the beginning denied by Mr. Sen and his missionaries, and the more advanced section held out in a body from the Church, till their demands were met. After much correspondence and discussion something like a compromise was effected, and seats were provided out-side the screen, for the advanced families, in a corner of the *Mandir*.

It is also fit to mention here, that as a matter of course, this advanced party had not much respect for the system of education that was being pursued in Mr. Sen's Female Normal School; and they proceeded to open an independent Boarding School of their own, for the education of their own girls, under the superintendence of a competent English Mistress.

In these counter-movements and independent efforts, the intelligent reader can already discern, the silent growth of a party of advanced thinkers in the progressive Church, even so early as 1871-72.

The other event connected with this period is the passing of Act III of 1872. As the number of inter-marriages and widow-marriages, according to pure theistic rites, multiplied, doubts as to their validity in the eye of the Law began to trouble many minds; and steps were accordingly taken, as early as 1867, to move the imperial legislature for giving the needed protection. Chiefly through the exertions of Mr. Sen, a Bill for legalizing these marriages, was introduced into the Council of Sir John Lawrence, the then Governor General of India. It was not a common ordeal through which this measure had to pass, during the subsequent stages of its progress and transformation. The shape in which Sir Henry Maine introduced it into Sir John Lawrence's Council, evoked the earnest opposition of the Hindu Community at large, who discovered in it certain dangerous and injurious principles. Then it was introduced in another shape, "The Brahma Marriage Bill"; but even then it could not escape hostile opposition. Our conservative friends of the Adi Samâj opposed it with all their might, and compelled the Government to give it a further transformation in its present shape. At its last and final stage, however, it was passed into law on the 19th of March 1872. The question of marriageable age of our girls and boys was one of the prominent points in this controversy; and Mr. Sen helped the legislature in fixing the minimum limit, by collecting the opinion of many eminent medical men of this country. Let me here quote a paragraph from Miss. Collet's Sketch of the history of the Brahma Samâj, illustrating the growth of public opinion on this important question of social reform.

"In the course of this agitation, one point of great importance came up for discussion, *vis.*, the age at which marriage is desirable in India, especially for women, who now suffer even more than men from the prevalent custom of child-marriage. This pernicious

practice has, for many centuries, sapped the physical and moral strength of the nation, but the difficulty of breaking down so long-established a custom is very great. As a first step towards moving public opinion in this direction, Keshub Chunder Sen, on behalf of the Indian Reform Association, addressed a circular letter (in April 1871) to some of the most distinguished medical men in India, requesting their professional opinion on the minimum marriageable age of native girls. Twelve replies were sent, most of them very full and instructive and all agreeing in condemnation of the present system. Dr. Mohendro Lal Sirkar, M. D., a Hindu physician of high repute, expressed his strong belief that premature marriage was "the greatest evil of our country. It has stood, so to say, at the very springs of the life of the nation, and prevented the normal expanse of which it is capable." And Dr. J. Fayer, M. D., C. S. I., from the European side, encouraged the movement thus:—"You have my most cordial sympathy in a movement which, if carried out, will do more physically to regenerate and morally to advance your countrymen and women than almost any other that your zeal for their improvement could promote." The limitations of age in the new Native Marriage Act (which is a purely permissive measure, and constrains none except those who marry under it) are the first legislative beginnings of this reform."

That Mr. Sen also considered the limitations of age set forth in the Act,—viz., fourteen for the bride and eighteen for the bridegroom, as the first legislative beginnings of a wholesome reform, will be manifest from the following extract from one of his speeches, delivered on the 30th September 1871.

"Thirdly, we contemplate the abolition of early or premature marriages. There has always been a large amount of uncertainty and doubt in the public mind, as to the minimum marriageable age of Native girls. Reference was therefore made, a few months ago, to the leading medical authorities in Calcutta, and what is the result? It has been what we had anticipated. The medical authorities in Calcutta, almost unanimously declare, that sixteen is the minimum marriageable age of girls in this country. Dr. Charles makes a valuable suggestion; he holds that fourteen, being the commencement of adolescence may for the present be regarded, as the minimum age, at which Native girls may be allowed to marry, and may serve as a

starting point for reform in this direction. In conformity with his suggestion and the opinions given by the other referees, we have come to the conclusion that, for the present at least, it would be expedient to follow the provision in the Bill, which makes fourteen the minimum marriageable age of girls in this country, leaving it in the hands of time to develop this reform slowly and gradually into maturity and fulness."

From the above extracts it is evident to the reader, that at the time, when the Act III of 1872 was passed, Mr. Sen was strongly of opinion that even fourteen as marriageable age of our girls, was too low a point; and also that, he considerably helped in the formation of public opinion on this subject. He will presently see how Mr. Sen in his own case violated those very conditions, which he was instrumental in imposing upon others.

Second Schism.—During the period intervening between the passing of this Act in 1872, and the year 1878, the year of the second schism, internal dissensions of a serious character began to manifest themselves within Mr. Sen's Church. Apart from the doctrine of "Great men," which has been noticed before, two other doctrines of ominous import, viz., the doctrine of *Adesh* or Divine Command, and the doctrine of *Bidhan* or Dispensation, began to be preached with some degree of energy and consistency, at this time, by Mr. Sen and his Missionaries. I reserve the discussion of these two doctrines, like the first, for the second chapter of this narrative. A party of earnest and long-standing members of the Samâj, took serious objection to these doctrines and considered them fraught with evil tendencies. They also felt another very great want. They found the Church without constitution; the whole thing resting on the shoulders of one man, and left without all those legitimate checks on abuse or misdirection of power, which a constitutional mode of government alone can supply. They at once set themselves to work to counteract these tendencies and, to remove these

wants. They first held many private discussions with Mr. Sen and his missionaries, tried to expose the evil tendencies of the new doctrines, and to represent the necessity of giving the Church a regular constitution. But Mr. Sen and his missionaries seemed to have gone too far in their ways, to listen to the voice of reason. The earnest pleadings and protests of these men were treated with marked neglect,—and in many cases with positive contempt; till at last the protesting and progressive party were compelled to adopt more formal and public measures. They organised themselves into a regular party, delivered public lectures, issued a monthly Journal, called the "*Samadarshi*" or the Liberal, for the discussion of the contested questions, and made a series of efforts for the introduction of representative government in Church matters. They began to move this subject at the annual conferences of the Samâj, once compelled Mr. Sen by a letter of requisition to call a meeting, and once appointed something like a Committee of Elders, which, however, was never called by the secretary, who was one of Mr. Sen's missionaries. They mooted several times the question of the trust-deed of the Brahma Mandir, which, I fear, still stands in Mr. Sen's own name, and has not as yet been made over to a body of public trustees. All these doctrinal differences and constitutional efforts, only exposed this party of members to the displeasure of Mr. Sen and his missionaries. They were run down in the pages of the *Sunday Mirror*, with the most abusive epithets, and treated as a class of spiritually and morally degenerated people.

When the Church was yet agitated by these controversies, the intelligence broke like a "bomb-shell" in Calcutta, that Mr. Sen was about to get his eldest daughter, a girl of thirteen, and consequently below the age previously fixed by Mr. Sen himself, for the guidance of his Church, married to

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the young Maharajah of Kutch Behar, a lad of sixteen, and a non-Brahmo, who also was far below the age fixed by the new Act. News was also received, that Mr. Sen had made certain concessions of a compromising character to the young Maharaja's family, who were strict orthodox and idolatrous Hindus; whereupon some of the advanced Brahmos of Calcutta privately met, and deputed three persons from amongst themselves to wait upon Mr. Sen to know the particulars of the case. Mr. Sen replied by reticence on all the heads of information. Within a few days, the fact of the intended marriage was made public, and the whole Brahmo community was thrown into a whirlpool of agitation. Earnest entreaties, anxious enquiries, and indignant protests, poured in from every quarter;—from a number of advanced and influential Brahmos, the Brahmo Students, and the Brahmo ladies, of Calcutta, from fifty different mofussil Samâjes, and numerous other private individuals connected with the Church.

In spite of these earnest entreaties and protests, Mr. Sen proceeded to celebrate the marriage, and what was still more painful, he further demeaned the position of the Samâj by failing to enforce its rites on the occasion of the marriage, and also by allowing the performance of certain idolatrous rites. The excitement was very great when Mr. Sen returned to the metropolis. Many of his old friends and well-wishers expected, that perhaps he would now see his recent mistake,—perhaps he would do something to allay the growing displeasure of his friends and associates, perhaps he would retire for a time from the head of affairs, and allow the Church to have constitution and rest. But, no: he at once assumed a defiant attitude, declared the marriage as an effect of divine command, sternly rejected three letters of requisition successively sent by a party of influential members, for calling a meeting, called it sin to look into the letters of protest, and at last came and took

forcible possession of the pulpit, with the help of the police, in the face of a resolution, previously passed by the Congregation, deposing him and appointing some other ministers.

At this point those who were seeking to vindicate the principles of the Church, and to place it on a constitutional basis, were obliged to appeal to the Brahma body in general and to the provincial Samâjes in particular. Within the incredibly short period of a fortnight, as many as 21 Samâjes and more than 400 individual Brahmans and Brahmicas, from all parts of India, replied, strongly urging the necessity of leaving Mr. Sen with his Church, and organising a new Society on a constitutional basis. Thus in accordance with the expressed wishes of so many brethren, and the privately ascertained wishes of numerous others, the Sadharan Brahma Samâj was duly organised on the 15th of May 1878. Being ushered into existence in the midst of a hurricane of agitation, it has had scarcely time, during the last three years of its existence, to develop its constitution and to place its organisation on a sound and secure basis. Yet has Providence permitted it to lay its hands upon much useful work—a record of which I reserve for the last chapter.

Reflections.—The foregoing historical sketch, I hope, will dispel from many minds, the wrong notions about the real history of the Brahma movement. Many for instance, are under the impression that Mr. Sen is the founder of the movement, or at least the mainspring thereof. Those who entertained this notion, were naturally led to believe that the whole movement had suffered a fatal collapse, when they found the power of Mr. Sen almost shattered to pieces by the last agitation. But let not our friends and sympathisers lose heart so easily. Let them remember there is One, shaping and moulding our individual destinies for the furtherance of His cause.

In spite of all our imperfections we must yet live and do His work ; for our reliance is on Him and Him alone. Secondly, during the course of the preceding history the reader must have observed, that even so early as 1871-72, serious differences of opinion, made themselves felt in the party of Mr. Sen, and that there were actual efforts after independent organisation. These facts will surely dispose him to discredit all statements, which seek to connect the recent schism, with feelings of a personal character. These notions will be further cleared up as we proceed.

THE NEW DISPENSATION.

From the day of the separation, the Brahmo Samâj of India or Mr. Sen's Church, began freely to develop many of its latent tendencies. But the New Dispensation, properly so called, was not formally inaugurated till the beginning of the year 1880, when Mr. Sen in one of his sermons in connection with the anniversary of the Brahmo-Samâj, figuratively announced the birth of a new child (The New Dispensation), whom all the saints and all the older dispensations blessed as their heir and successor.

The inquisitive reader may be curious to know the leading features of this Dispensation, and I shall state them, as far as possible, in their own words. But before I do so, some explanatory remarks, giving the reader an idea of the meaning of the phrase Dispensation itself, seem to be necessary. Literally interpreted, the word Dispensation or rather its Bengali equivalent, of which the English word is a translation, means a *gift*—a gift of God. Hence it essentially means a manifestation of divine Providence,—a special divine arrangement for the salvation of humanity. Let the *Sunday Mirror*, the leading journal of Mr. Sen's party speak for itself.

“We believe that at special times and under special circumstances, when the world does need a revival or upheaving, and men do require the guidance of God, a *special manifestation of His will takes place*, and events happen which have a necessary connection with each other and may be interpreted as the working of divine Providence.” *Sunday Mirror*, 16th Nov. 1879.

But in what shape, the inquisitive reader may ask, does this special manifestation of Divine will take place?

Then let him ponder over the following extracts from the same journal, of April 10th 1881.

“When men are hopelessly gone in the way to misery and ruin, when a thick gloom of sin settles upon Society, when human eye-sight is unable to discern the right path, it is then that Providence sends to the world, one of those men, whose life has been sold to His almighty will.” &c.

The following lines taken from Mr. Sen’s lecture on “Great men” will also throw much light on this point.

“Great men appear when they are needed. In the history of nations there occur now and then crises of a very serious character, when the advancing tide of progress shakes the very foundations of society, at such times certain great minds appear, being called forth by the peculiar necessities of the age, who avert impending perils, meet all existing wants and remodel society on an improved basis.”

And further on.

“In the established economy of Providence they are special dispensations, to meet the pressing wants of humanity.”

Let me string together all these ideas. In the history of nations, there arise times of special spiritual need, when men absolutely require the guidance of God ; it is then that God sends down one of those men, who averts impending perils, meets all existing wants, and remodels society. The appearance of such a man forms a part of the established economy of Providence, and is a special Dispensation. This evidently means, that the idea of a dispensation is inseparably associated with the appearance of a great man as its mouth-piece and harbinger. That Mr. Sen also considers a Dispensation inseparably associated with a great-man will be further seen from the declaration :—

“I say it (the New Dispensation) stands upon the same level with the Jewish Dispensation, the Christian Dispensation and the Vaishnava Dispensation through Chaitanya.” (Vide Mr. Sen’s lecture on “We Apostles of the New Dispensation.”)

“The Vaishnava Dispensation *through Chaitanya*”—does it not plainly mean that the manifestation of a Dispensation is chiefly through a greatman ?

If the unusually sceptical reader is still doubtful as to the truth of this interpretation, his doubts will be permanently silenced, I hope, by the following lines from the *Sunday Mirror* of Nov. 16th. 1879.

“The minister (Mr. Sen) is, as we believe him to be a part, a great part, a central part of the Dispensation. It is he who has given life and tone to the entire movement; and as he is completely identified with it, *his preachings and precepts we accept as the embodiment of the Dispensation itself.* Thus then we cannot do away with this man, who is the leader, the mouth piece, the heaven-appointed missionary, of what we call the Brahma Samāj. The *Indian Mirror* accepts in its entirety the plan and programme of his life—the plan and programme that is to give India her life and salvation.”

It will be seen then, that not only is the idea of a Dispensation essentially and intimately associated with the appearance of a Great man on the stage of history, but it means in the present case, the sum total of Mr. Sen's preachings and precepts; and what language could be plainer than that of the *Mirror*, where the plan and programme of Mr. Sen's life is set forth as the plan and programme that will give India her life and salvation. But wait: I must not do injustice to Mr. Sen himself by omitting to notice portions of his lecture on “We Apostles of the New Dispensation,” where he says;—

“It will probably be said that each Dispensation has a central personality, and that, therefore, willingly or unwillingly, I must permit myself to be treated as a Moses or a Chaitanya. Let me tell you this seems impossible. For we represent a new Dispensation. Its distinguishing feature is its immediacy, its denial of a mediator. * * * * None of my fellow-believers would take God, at second hand, but would go direct to Him for light and salvation, thinking it wrong and impious to rely upon me or anybody else for intercession.”

And again.—

“If Christ was the centre of his dispensation am I not the centre of this? Ungenerous and untruthful critics have insinuated

that as Jesus claimed to be the king of the Jews, for which offence his enemies crucified him, so am I ambitious of being honored as King of the Indians, of the Bengalis at any rate. Ah, it is certainly not fair or kind of our critics to say so. Shall a sinner vie with Christ for honors? God forbid. Jesus was a born Saint and I a great sinner. Blessed Jesus, Holy spirit, my honored master! if India will revile and persecute me and take my life blood out of me, still Jesus thou shalt continue to have my homage."

The above remarks require a few comments. Here Mr. Sen totally forgets the point of contention. No body ever contended that his followers regard him as a *mediator* or *intercessor*, in that sense in which Jesus Christ is regarded by his followers, or that he aspires to vie with Christ his divine master, for honors. The contention was, and still is, and I do solemnly aver it, that there is a tendency in his Church to regard him as *the centre* of his Dispensation, and to accept his preachings as revelations of infallible truth;—thus binding down the thoughts and consciences of men to the utterances of one man, and compromising the character and chief glory of Brahmoism, as a liberator of the human mind, and a reconciler of *faith*, *reason* and *conscience*. The contention was, and still is, that this tendency will ultimately lead to the ancient error of exalting *authority* above conscience and independence, in matters of faith. And is it not a fact that whatever, Mr. Sen does or says, however eccentric, wild, or ridiculous, is promptly taken up and defended by his followers as a fresh revelation of Divine will? Do not be carried away by sentimental outbursts, gentle reader, but mark that, Mr. Sen has not yet replied to the principal charge, and allayed the worst apprehensions about the tendencies of his movement. Yet I cannot but thank his adversaries for having succeeded in extracting even this much from him, which may have some good influence over his Church. But whilst thanking him and his enemies for such declarations, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that he gives himself an altogether unique position

in connection with this Dispensation, as will be manifest from the following extracts from his speeches.

“If I am not a prophet I am a singular man. I am not as ordinary men are, and I say this deliberately” (Lecture on “Am I an Inspired Prophet.”)

Again.

“But men have attempted to prove that I have been guided by my own imagination, reason, and intellect. Under this conviction they have from time to time protested against my proceedings. They should remember that to protest against the cause I uphold is to protest against the *dispensation* of God Almighty.”

“In doing this work, (the work of God) I am confident I have not done anything that is wrong. Surely I am not to blame for anything which I may have done under Heaven’s injunction. If any one is to blame, the Lord God of heaven is to blame, for having taught me and constrained me.”

And again.

“The Lord said I was to have no heaven but life in Himself; no doctrine, no creed but perennial and perpetual inspiration from Heaven.”—The same lecture.

In another lecture he says:—

“While I was in the mother’s womb I drank that precious blood, (blood of Jesus shed upon the cross) and grew in stature and strength.” (*Vide Lecture on “We Apostles of the New Dispensation.”*)

This passage requires a little explanation. The above declaration may lead unwary readers to think, that Mr. Sen was born and brought up in a Christian family, so he drank the blood of Christ in his mother’s womb. No such thing. His parents were, and the surviving mother still is, a staunch orthodox Hindu of the Vaishnava sect. What then does Mr. Sen mean by drinking Christ’s blood in mother’s womb. This declaration is to be understood in the light of the following extract from his lecture on “Greatmen.”

“They (Greatmen) are ordained and sanctified as prophets at their birth,”

The only possible meaning that can be attached to Mr. Sen’s declaration, is that he believes himself to have been

ordained in some way, by the spirit of Christ in his mother's womb. I leave the reader to ponder over this mystical expression.

The above extracts clearly shew, (1) that Mr. Sen in his own eyes is a singular person and one ordained as a great man in the mother's womb; (2) that he considers himself gifted with perennial and perpetual inspiration; (3) that in his proceedings in connection with the Brahma Samâj he is confident he has not done anything that is wrong; and (4) that those who protest against his proceedings protest against the Dispensation of God.

Could self-assertion go further? To differ from Mr. Sen is to protest against God. Good Heavens! have we after all come to this. As a further proof of this assumption of Divine authority let the reader glance over the following lines:—

“They (all who protested against the Kutch Behar marriage) ought to have said to the Minister (Mr. Sen)—“ We reverently admit your inspiration and bow before it. * * * This important political match (his daughter's marriage) is Providential. It is God's doing.—(Vide reply to Mr. Tyssen in *Sunday Mirror* of October 9th 1881.)

And simply because they could not conscientiously say so, simply because they could not but regard the marriage of his daughter, in direct contravention of our accepted principles, as wrong, their earnest protest has been described, as an “arrogant defiance,” (which) “was only the impotent and feeble protest of man's self-sufficient reason against the economy of Providence. * * * They insulted faith and therefore had no right to be heard.” Yet more! Mr. Sen in his divine indignation calls these men “infidels,” “worldly-minded men,” “sceptics,” and “impostors.” (Vide *Devotional* in *Sunday Mirror* 21st September 1879). Let the reader also peruse the following extract from a prayer of Mr. Sen, translated from the

Dharmatatwa, the Bengali journal of the New Dispensation, of 16th Assin 1287. B. E.

“ O Thou Mother ! Whosoever is thy friend is also an enemy of thy enemies. Whosoever honors thy enemies, and indulges them, is not thy friend, the same doth not love thee. We, who have found shelter under thy New Dispensation, can not forgive thy enemies—all who try their best to prevent the establishment of thy kingdom on earth. “ Long prayers are useless, yoga and bhakti are foolishness, and the Dispensation is of little consequence,”—all who declare this are thy enemies, them we shall not tolerate. It makes our hearts quake to think, how many souls are these horrible monsters ruining, and the throats of how many brethren and sisters they are cutting. They are ruthless dacoits. Knowing them to be thy enemies we shall take arms against them; we shall not touch their bodies, but shall cut down their conceit. Disguised under a religious garb these men are winning over to their side the hearts of many young men and women of many places, and poisoning them with deadly venom. * * * * These demons in human shape are attracting thy children unto themselves in the name of religion and prayer ; and are cutting their throats afterwards ; leading them astray from the paths of faith and devotion, making them worldly, sensual and luxurious and spreading the poison of scepticism and unbelief throughout the land. Dear mother ! Mahomet thy devoted child never forgave the kafirs. How he resolved to extirpate the enemies of God ! how he carried on war against them ! “ As long as Mahomet is alive, let any man, who dares, prevent the establishment of God’s kingdom or act against it ;” this was his challenge. The earth shook beneath his lion-like power, and he extirpated the race of kafirs. He never tolerated the kafir. O Mother, when these kafirs offend us personally, we can pardon them, but when their attacks are levelled against thee, how can we bear with them.

Comments on the above are almost needless ; yet I should not forget to ask the reader to connect together the premises of the syllogism involved here. (1) Those who speak against God are *dacoits*, and *demons in human shape* ; (2) those who protest against Mr. Sen’s proceedings, speak against God. Then let me leave him to draw the inference.

Good heavens, I once more cry, have we at last come to this: —I aver then, my conscience justifying me, that there

is a tendency in the Church of Mr. Sen to attach Divine authority to his preachings and precepts, and Mr. Sen himself lends his voice to strengthen and promote such a belief. Let the reader hear what a writer in a recent number of the *Contemporary Review*, whose article the *Sunday Mirror* calls an "appreciative" one, says :—

"It may be true that some of his followers revere him as something more than human and honor him as an infallible Pope over the Church."

If the over-charitably disposed reader is still unconvinced about the truth of the fact of this tendency, I must refer him to the publication of some of Mr. Sen's speeches and sermons in Bengali, by Babu Peary Mohan Chandhuri, one of Mr. Sen's Missionaries, where, if my memory deceives me not, in the preface it is distinctly said, that the utterances of Mr. Sen were not to be accepted as the utterances of ordinary men, but that every word and syllable of them was infallible truth. Unfortunately, I have not the book with me at present, else I could have furnished the reader with a translation.

Let me once more sum up these ideas. The preceding extracts must have clearly proved to the intilligent reader, that the doctrine of Dispensation really means a special Divine arrangement for the salvation of mankind ; that this Divine arrangement is generally manifested in the shape of the appearance of a Greatman on the stage of history ; that according to Mr. Sen's followers, he is that Greatman, as far as the Brahma Dispensation is concerned, and his preachings and precepts constitute that dispensation ; that while protesting against the charge of mediation, Mr. Sen does yet betray, that in his own estimation he is a singular and perennially inspired person, and that to protest against his utterances and proceedings, is to protest against the Dispensation of Providence ; and that, he does not scruple to call those who honestly differ from him by such names as

“sceptics,” “infidels,” “worldly-minded men,” “demons in human shape” &c. I do most earnestly protest against this doctrine and the tendency that it has developed. I do honestly believe that it directly tends to compromise the character of Brahmoism, as a liberating and spiritually elevating faith, and to degenerate the movement into a narrow sect, whence freedom of thought will be soon proscribed.

Let the Brahmo reader form a clear conception of the principles involved in this controversy. It represents the old conflict between *authority* and *independence*. The voice of *authority* says:—“Do this, because the Vedas or the Bible or Christ says so; to which *independence* replies by saying,”—I cannot do this simply *because* the Vedas, or the Bible or Christ says so, but I must previously feel, and be convinced that the Vedas or the Bible or Christ has said the *truth* in this instance,” In other words, authority makes its ultimate appeal to a voice outside the man’s conscience, whereas independence makes that appeal to the conscience itself. Or the same thing in another form: the voice of authority declares;—“First believe, receive things upon trust, and to your faith shall be added knowledge”; to which, *independence* replies:—“First add knowledge, and then let me see if I can believe.”

Now it has been the error of all ancient creeds, I say this with due deference to *all of them*, that they uniformly built their *faith* on the basis of supernaturalism and authority; and it is the mission of Brahmoism, as far as I have been able to understand it, to build faith and spiritual life, on the pure basis of naturalism and independence. It is this phase of it, I think, which makes it specially interesting to European thinkers;—for many there are, belonging both to the old orthodox schools of thought, as well as to modern scepticism, who sincerely think, that such an experiment, altogether novel in its kind in the

history of the world, is sure to fail ; that there is no *via media*, so to say, between the unconditional surrender to authority on the one hand, and rank secularism on the other. The Brahmo Samâj, during the last fifty years of its existence, has not only taught, but has also shown by practical religious organisation, that reason and intuition, aided by prayer and grace, can practically form a basis for man's spiritual life. If after the preaching and experience of about fifty years, we now begin to show a tendency towards inspired and infallible authority, is it not virtually giving up our old ground, and beating not only a shameful retreat, but also surrendering to the enemy ? Is not such a tendency essentially un-Brahmic in its nature,—opposed to the very spirit of natural and pure theism ?

But perhaps it will be argued,—is not the wisdom of a singularly gifted and experienced individual a better guide than the vain judgements of men ? Have we not accepted the revolution of the earth upon the authority of Galileo, and gravitation upon that of Newton ? To which I reply, neither Galileo nor Newton, compels you to take things upon trust, but rather went through painful processes of reasoning and calculation to secure your conviction. The case is more serious with respect to truths concerning the spiritual progress of the soul. The object we uniformly aim at in all spiritual culture, is the elevation of the soul. But how can the soul be elevated by mere reception of truth at second-hand ? For no truth however sacred or useful can be truth to me, or can exert any ennobling moral influence over my nature, until I morally enter into it and grasp it by the spirit. But what does spiritual grasp of truth mean but earnest conviction ? By the very effort to grasp truth, are the soul's moral and spiritual energies brought into operation. This spiritual life is the best safeguard against corruption and degeneracy. Extinguish this light, the light of conscience and free inquiry,

and you at once expose the individual and also society to slow but sure moral degeneracy. Hence is it, that the ages of superstition, in the history of Nations have always been ages of corruption, both in Church and State. It is our solemn conviction that man cannot extinguish the candle lighted by the hand of God with impunity. He cannot surrender his precious rights without bringing down upon himself the inevitable penalty. It is for this reason, that we strenuously oppose every doctrine or principle, which directly or indirectly tends to exalt authority over independence in the Brahmo Samâj

Does the reader now wonder, why were a party of men in the Samâj protesting against such doctrines even so early as 1872 and 1873? They viewed with dismay the progress and secret propagation of doctrines, which inevitably tended to degenerate Brahmoism into one of those narrow creeds, which have so long fettered human thought. All their efforts were directed towards counteracting this tendency, (1) by exposing the fallacies of such doctrines, (2) by trying to bring Mr. Sen under the wholesome and regulating influence of a constitutional mode of Church-government. And what was their reward? Why, they were not considered fit for hearing; and slur and infamy were cast upon them. For a long time they laboured under a cloud of misrepresentations and had no means of making themselves heard by the reading public. But God be thanked, they can now speak and plead before the tribunal of public justice, for an impartial hearing, both here and in England.

But do we not believe that the Brahmo Samâj is under the guidance of Providence? Do we not see the hand of God in this remarkable upheaval of the native mind? Do we not feel that the incidents and events in connection with this movement, are evidently leading towards the fulfilment

of a Divine purpose, viz. the ultimate regeneration of this country? If so, the reader may justly ask, why do you chafe and fret against this man? I can speak for myself. I do firmly believe that we are all under the operation of the spirit of God; that every one who from sincerity and faith, and in a spirit of self-surrender has joined this movement, has done so, under the influence of the Divine spirit;—that in proportion as we have learnt humble submission to the Divine will, we have also helped towards the fulfilment of that Divine purpose;—and that there is a large number of men in the Brahma Samâj, in whom there is this spirit of submission and self-surrender, consequently the Church as a whole is under the guidance of the Divine will; I do believe all this,—yet I do not believe,—nay I do earnestly protest against such a doctrine,—that all this divine leading is to be interpreted according to the sayings and doings of a single person, or that a single man's voice is to be invested with divine and infallible authority. Does not Mr. Sen practically call upon his followers to make this surrender of their conscience to him, when he does not scruple to stigmatize the honest difference of opinion of his critics, as “the impotent and feeble protest of man's self-sufficient reason against the economy of Providence.”? I leave the candid reader to judge.

The Creed.—I should not detain the general reader too long in these controversies, which properly speaking directly affect the Brahma Samâj. I must hasten to give him an idea of some of the leading features of the New Dispensation. Let me first quote the “Creed” of the New Dispensation, from the first number of the *New Dispensation*, a paper edited by Mr. Sen.

“ONE God, one Scripture, one Church.
 Eternal Progress of the Soul.
 Communion of Prophets and Saints.
 Fatherhood and Motherhood of God; Brotherhood of man and Sisterhood of woman.

Harmony of knowledge and Holiness, Love and Work, Yoga and Asceticism in their highest development.
Loyalty to Sovereign."

The mother-hood of God.—Of these principles I reserve the doctrine of "the communion of saints" for future treatment. Next after this comes the motherhood of God, which requires a little notice. The special mention of this aspect of the Divine nature in the "Creed," indicates, that more than usual importance is attached to it, and that the recognition of the mother-side of the Divinity forms an essential article of faith, according to our friends of the New Dispensation. So it is. The use of the sweet name of mother, as applied to God, is not altogether new in the Brahma Samâj. Such hymns as "why should they, whose Eternal Mother is a source of joy be sorry or joyless," and such phrases as "the most motherly of mothers" were long known in the Brahma Samâj; but since the advent of the New Dispensation, a peculiar force and emphasis, and a degree of unusual importance, have been attached to this aspect of the Divinity, as if it was a matter of sudden revelation. This great discovery was heralded to the world, literally from house-tops, by flags with the word "Mother" inscribed upon them, and was also paraded in the streets by processions, where the name of the "Mother" was chanted in newly composed hymns;—nay, our friends of the Dispensation went so far, as to publish a proclamation, evidently written by Mr. Sen, in the name of God, as Mother of India, in the columns of the *Sunday Mirror* of December 14th 1879. I quote the proclamation as appearing in Miss Collet's Brahma Year-Book for 1880.

PROCLAMATION.

To all my soldiers in India,

My affectionate greetings to all. Accept this Proclamation; believe that it goeth forth from Heaven, in the name and with the

love of your Mother, and carry out its behests like loyal soldiers and devoted children.

Ye are my soldiers, my covenanted soldiers. Ye are bound to fight valiantly and faithfully under my banners, and no other god shall ye serve. I will give you victory, and glory eternal shall be yours. I have chosen India to show unto all nations the workings of my special Providence in accomplishing national redemption. The British Government is my Government; the Brahmó Samáj is my Church. . . My daughter, Queen Victoria, have I ordained and set over the country to rule its people, and give them education, material comfort and protect their health and property. . . Be loyal to her, for the warrant of her appointment bears my signature. . . Love her and honour her as my servant and representative, and give her your loyal support and co-operation so that she may carry out my purposes unhindered and give India political and material prosperity. . . Tell all people to come direct to me, without a mediator or intercessor, and accept me as their Mother. The influence of the earthly mother at home, and of the queen mother at the head of the Government, will raise the hearts of my Indian children to the Supreme Mother, and I will gather them in the Kingdom of Heaven, and give them peace and salvation. Soldiers, fight bravely and establish my dominion. INDIA'S MOTHER.

Let not the reader understand that we object to God's being called a mother. Nay, call him by as many sweet names as you choose Call him not only the "most fatherly of fathers," the "most motherly of mothers" but also the most friendly of friends, the most masterly of all masters, the most loving of all lovers, the most kingly of all kings, and so on. Leave these to the spiritual tastes and devotional sentiments of individual worshippers, Why do you make it a part of a creed?—and then again, why do you make such a parade of a pious and deeply devout sentiment?—a course, from which every truly God-loving soul should naturally and instinctively shrink. Love is a sensitive plant; it blushes before the derisive looks of strangers; far less can it bear to make the name of the beloved an object of laughter. No wonder that Miss Collet should call this an "undisguised piece of blasphemy."

Perhaps our friends of the Dispensation have reasons to reconcile themselves to such a proceeding, which are not known to us. However, I leave the reader to judge.

Eclecticism.—The second noticeable feature of the New Dispensation is its idea of inclusive eclecticism. It aspires to bring about a solution of all the old creeds and Churches of the world. Let me describe this idea in the words of Mr. Sen himself. (Vide lecture on “We Apostles of the New Dispensation.”)

“Come then to the synthetic unity of the New Dispensation. You will see how all other dispensations are harmonized and unified in this, a whole host of Churches resolved into a scientific unity. In the midst of the multiplicity of dispensations in the world, there is indubitably a concealed unity and it is of the highest importance to us all, that we should discover it with the light of logic and science.”

“All these dispensations are connected with each other in the economy of Providence. They are connected in one continuous chain which may be traced to the earliest age. They are a concatenated series of ideas, and when rationally apprehended, they show a systematic evolution of thought, a development of religious life. Popular opinion, however, on this subject has always run in a different line. Men have not seen, and, therefore, they have ignored and denied the connecting link between the several Dispensations.

“The new Dispensation has discovered the missing link. It has found the secret thread which goes through these Dispensations and keeps them together. Where others see only confusion and anomaly, it sees order and continuity. Joyfully it exclaims—I have found the science of dispensation at last:—unity in multiplicity.”

Now what are we to understand by this solution and synthetic unity of all dispensations? It can possibly mean one of three things: (1) an attempt at a wise and judicious selection of truths from all, believing all of them more or less inspired by God, and all of them containing at least some elements of truth; (2) an attempt like that of Professor Max-Muller to discover certain underlying principles which are common to all creeds and Churches;

and (3) an attempt to prove that all the creeds and Churches, as they stand at present, are essentially not hostile to each other but are parts and parcels of the same system, each discharging a complementary function as it were.

If it is the first, which is meant by this inclusive eclecticism, then it has our hearty concurrence. But in that case, it has no claim to be promulgated as a new or original idea; for, were it not Rajah Ram Mohun Roy and his friends, who first strove for the recognition of this principle? Look to the Rajah's publications, specially his "Precepts of Jesus, the guide to peace and happiness"—although it must be acknowledged that the Rajah and his friends pursued quite a different policy in framing the ritual the order of service &c., of the Brahma Samâj. They were made Hindu and Vedantic in their essential features;—but that might be taken as a difference in the *modus operandi* so to say. But as far and as the Rajah's conceptions were concerned, were they not perfectly catholic and eclectic? At least are not these eclectic principles as old, as the year 1866 or 1867, when a compilation of theistic texts was published by the Progressive Brahmoe, with the sanskrit motto from the Bhagavat;—"As the bee gathereth honey from flowers great and small, so does the really wise man gather substantial truth from the chaff of all scriptures great and small?" Then, it cannot be described as a new-fangled idea as if discovered from the beginning of 1880.

If it is the second, we might safely leave the task to philologists and ethnologists for investigation and research. Such an enquiry properly pertains to the domain of thought more than of spirituality. What we want in religion is something that would strengthen our conscience, or ennoble our hearts, and would thereby draw us nearer to God.

There remains only one more interpretation, which perhaps, is the real meaning of this synthetic, unity of all

Dispensations. It is the view which regards all the existing creeds and Churches, as they stand, to be equally divine and equally authoritative, and capable, even in their present condition, of a general fusion. The following extracts from the *Sunday Mirror* of October, 23rd 1881, put this view of the question beyond doubt.

“Our position is not that truths are to be found in all religions, but that all the established religions of the world are true. There is a great deal of difference between the two assertions.”

“The glorious mission of the New Dispensation is to harmonize religions and revelations, to establish the truth of every particular dispensation and upon the basis of these particulars to establish the largest and broadest induction of a general and glorious proposition.”

Let us try to grasp these conceptions? What do our friends mean? All existing dispensations as a general rule can be analyzed under two grand heads—(1) a number of books or scriptures which form the *doctrinal* part of their creed (2) a number of practices or customs which form the *ceremonial* part of that creed. Do our friends consider all these books, most of them bearing the records of the sayings and doings of great teachers, to be divinely inspired and equally authoritative in matters of faith? or do they consider the practices of all these sects to be equally acceptable? In any case, there remains the most serious question, how to reconcile the contradictory and conflicting statements of these different scriptures and also the different practices? Are we to accept Jesus, for instance, as the light and the way, as he requires us to do;—submitting to his yoke, through baptism and the communion? or are we to throw ourselves at the feet of the Prophet of Arabia, according to the direct injunctions of the Koran, as the last and greatest of the prophets;—submitting at the same time to all the practices of Moslem faith? It is this apparent difficulty which leads the reviewer of the New Dispensation, in the *Contemporary Review*, whose article

the *Sunday Mirror* calls "appreciative," to say; "How the contradictions of these writings are to be explained and harmonized, we are not yet authoritatively informed."

But other questions seem to be involved in this controversy. In the first place, what is the *mission* of the New Dispensation then? Is it simply to let these fighting brethren to see, they are brethren and they should not fight. Are its duties simply those of a peace-maker? or has it any thing new to confer upon humanity? In an allegory Mr. Sen compared the dispensations of the world to so many givers of individual pearls, and the New Dispensation to the string that unites them together. But does the string in a garland of pearls confer any thing new and valuable to the possessor? would he be a whit less rich without it? or is his stock increased even by a single pearl on account of it? Secondly, when we see that our friends of the Dispensation are not satisfied with the old Brahma position, that truths are to be found in all religions and that these truths form a common basis, but assume that all existing religions as they are, are true and Providential, we feel tempted to ask whether they think that, each and all of them serve the divine purpose of human salvation? If so, what need is there for the New Dispensation to preach its gospel to them? If, however, it is alleged, that they cannot serve that purpose, by reason of their imperfection and fragmentary character, then the theory of their forming parts of the economy of Providence, falls to the ground;—for certainly God could not have revealed systems which fail just to fulfil that very purpose for which such revelation was at all necessary. Thus are we led into a number of apparent inconsistencies.

Yet there are other causes for doubting the feasibility of this idea. Perhaps, as a practical illustration of this spirit of inclusive solution of all dispensations, Mr. Sen

makes a rather free use of such phrases, as "The Eternal Son of God," when speaking of Christ; "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," and also of such ceremonies as Hom, Baptism, Eucharist &c. But what are the effects? Do they practically draw larger numbers to the fold of Brahmoism? or do they practically lessen the enmity of the respective sects, whose forms and phraseology are thus misappropriated? I purposely call this misappropriation, for they are always used in an arbitrary and novel sense. Or rather is not the effect quite contrary? They delude people with near approaches, give rise to hopes of our probable conversion, and then exasperate them in the end, by disappointing those hopes. The present writer once personally heard an influential, and devout orthodox Hindu gentleman of Calcutta, complain, that the hopes he was led to cherish, about the final conversion of Mr. Sen's party to orthodox Hinduism, on account of their free and frequent use of the name of *Hari* and other Hindu Gods, were, rudely dispelled by that horrible, (I am using his sentiments) ceremony of baptism in the name of Christ. Witness also how many honest Christian minds stand horrified at these imitations, which they take in the light of parodies of some of their most sacred and solemn rites. It is our strong and mature conviction, that the first thing necessary for the successful propagation of a new faith is a position of honest and manly independence. There is such a thing as honesty of expression which religious teachers should never forget. To make a rather free use of the forms and phraseology of others, in a novel and arbitrary sense of our own, is to inflict upon them a grievous injustice, and to envelop our real ideas and doctrines in a cloud of doubt and suspicion; which cannot but be injurious to the cause of propagation. Thus is this vaunted inclusiveness and synthetic unity, when carefully examined, found to be an actual cause of weakness.

But whilst failing to perceive the feasibility of this synthetic solution, I cannot but acknowledge with warm gratitude, the service Mr. Sen has done to the Brahma Samâj, by largely contributing towards widening its sympathies. The very fact of linking together the names of various prophets and great men of different sects, as objects of veneration and love, at once teaches the young aspirant after spiritual progress, in the Brahma Samâj, to accept truth from whatever quarter it comes, and to respect the great and the good of all ages and all countries. Considering the amount of narrowness and bigotry prevailing in the world, this is a great lesson indeed! for which his name will be gratefully remembered in the history of the Brahma Samâj.

But the boon thus offered with one hand seems to be withdrawn with the other, when we think how far the doctrine of Dispensation makes it essential, for Mr. Sen's personality to be associated with this work of synthesis. Let the reader hear what the Editor of the *Calcutta Statesman*, always regarded as a very friendly critic by the *Sunday Mirror*, says on this subject.

"Whereas each religion of the world is a precious jewel, Brahmoism" we learn "is a string of Jewels." The meaning of all this is tolerably clear. All prophets hitherto have had but a single idea. Christ, Mahomet Buddha were all one-idea men. They and their ideas are all summed up in Babu Keshub Chunder Sen and Brahmoism."—

Further on, the same writer says.

"Is he not a revealer of truth, but a clever craftsman whose skill manifests itself by so selecting and arranging the materials he has borrowed from greater teachers, as to form a system, all the parts of which seem naturally to group themselves around Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, as their centre and sun. For it is impossible to read the weekly organ (the *Sunday Mirror*) of these Hindu eclectic, without observing, not merely that great prominence is given to the Minister, (Mr. Sen) but that the minister's personality is absolutely essential to the cohesion and vitality of his system of truths."

Let the candid reader observe that this intimate connection of Mr. Sen's personality with the idea of the

Dispensation has not only been a matter of considerable misgiving to a section of the Church, who early discovered it, and thought it their duty to counteract it, as the foregoing history shows, it has not only been overtly and covertly preached by Mr. Sen's immediate followers during the last 9 or 10 years, but it has been so prominent, that it has not failed to strike the attention of a casual and outside observer, who has no mind to cavil or throw dirt at them, and every disposition, on the other hand, to be strictly just and equitable. I leave the reader to think for himself, and hasten to give him some idea of other important features of the new Dispensation.

The communion of Saints.—The foremost in rank after the idea of synthetical solution is the doctrine of the communion of saints. But what do our friends mean by the communion of saints? Let Mr. Sen speak for himself.

"You have no doubt heard of such a thing as the communion of saints. What is it? Is it the superficial doctrine of objectivity or is it the deeper philosophy? . . . The Christ of older theologies is the barren outward fact, the dead Christ of history and dogma. But the Christ of the New Dispensation is an in-dwelling power, a living spirit, a fact of consciousness. It is this philosophy of subjectivity which underlies the pilgrimages to saints as they are called. . . . As pilgrims we approach the great saints and commune with them in spirit. We kill the distance of time and space. We enter into them and they into us. In our souls we cherish them and we imbibe their character and principles." (Vide Lecture, on "We Apostles of the New Dispensation")

For practically carrying out this principle of subjectivity, pilgrimages to some of these saints were organised. The reader is not to suppose that these pilgrim devotees did actually undertake any journey by land or by water. What was done was this. For a week, the disciples were called upon by Mr. Sen to live with Socrates, Moses or Mahomet, in other words, to spend the week in meditating upon the preachings and doings of any particular prophet; and on the concluding Sunday, "a room in Calcutta (in Mr. Sen's

house) was transformed into an historical site in Palestine, Greece, Arabia or Northern India; conversation was carried on with the prophet invoked; lessons were taught and learned; a vivid imagination brought the historical person before the assembly, and his utterances of centuries ago were applied more or less skillfully to the exigencies of the present time or the difficulties of existing theological speculation." (I quote the words of that appreciative reviewer referred to before.)

A few remarks in way of comments seem to be necessary. The long and short of all this pompous phraseology,—the communion of saints, the pilgrimage to saints, &c., seems to be the inculcation of the duty of loving them; and of cherishing them in our souls, and of spiritually imbibing whatever is good in their *Characters and principles*! What loving, reverent and pious heart will say, no to this? Is it not natural for all who really love God and love godliness, to love all the good and great of the world?—nay more, all really faithful and God-loving souls great and small? Pope once described.

"Vice is a monster of so frightful a mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen."

Can not the very same thing be said with regard to real greatness, with the substitution of a few words?

Greatness is an angel of so lovely a mien,
As to be loved needs but to be seen."

Advise young men, as much as you can, to read the lives not only of those who have been called prophets in the world's history, but also of many others who walked in the humbler and quieter paths of life; whose names may not stand out prominently at the heads of sects or epochs, but who nevertheless lived earnest, honest, and manly lives upon earth, and speak to our hearts in more intelligible tones, being more akin to our common place tempted, every day lives. Teach young men to meditate

and pray over these lives well, with a view to imbibe the good that is in them; but why do you single out only the recognized prophets of the world, connect them with a supernatural theory, describe them as Heaven's delegates and messengers, and then represent such a belief as an essential and fundamental part of your creed?

Let the Brahma reader clearly grasp the points of contention, in this case.—(1) First, we protest against raising our natural love and reverence for the great and the good into a cut and dry theory, a defined and well proportioned doctrine, like the doctrine of Dispensation. (2) Secondly, we protest against making such a doctrine an important article of faith, as if in going to God we must necessarily go through prophets, as instanced in the case of the *Ahwars* and *Bhaktas* of the *Vishnava* sects of Southern India. The former process invests these greatmen with supernatural mission, consequently with supernatural authority, and makes honest difference from them a heinous sin, and submission to their authority the highest virtue; and thus inevitably tends to repress freedom of thought and conscience; whereas the second course, inseparably connects such a doctrine with the religious aspirations of many earnest minds; fatally warping their judgments and leading them into many wrong doctrines and practices; and tends to introduce saint-worship and intercession.

Then again is the view presented in the doctrine of "Greatmen" the correct one? Is it not more reasonable to look upon the world's Greatmen more as Earth's delegates to Heaven, than as Heaven's representatives? Are they not properly speaking, extraordinarily gifted individuals, in whom the collective prayers of a race find a representation and a vent? Does not a careful perusal of history tell us that they do not appear as Heaven's commissioned agents, but as the ablest exponents of the unuttered but widely-felt thoughts and sentiments of their race and times?—that

the individual rays of many minds are brought into a focus in them?—that their age makes them?—that they are the children of many little minds; consequently, they do not come to rule or to give law, but are rather pushed forward by the surging waves of national sentiment to be their leaders and mouthpieces,—and to serve them as their advocates?

Nor does Mr. Sen altogether omit to notice this view in his lecture. History tells us that at the time when Jesus was born, the whole Jewish race was in a state of deep religious ferment, consequent upon their contact with gentile thought. The earnest and pious amongst them were lamenting over the spectacle of political slavery under foreigners, and of corruption and degeneracy at home, and were almost daily expecting the advent of the promised King of the Jews. The birth of Buddha was also preceded by a deep national ferment, consequent upon the tyranny of the Brahmias. The whole country was groaning under her spiritual chains. No rank or order of society was safe against the invasions and encroachments of the Brahmins. The Sudras were repressed by the most inhuman laws; the kings often came into collision with the sacerdotal power and were subjected to penalties of disgrace and ex-communication; the middle and bread-winning classes found themselves despoiled of much of the fruits of their labour by the priestly impositions. Buddha made himself an exponent of this national groaning, and hence was his marvellous success with the oppressed classes. Mahomet too appeared at a juncture peculiar in the history of Arabia. At about, and a little before this time, we find the Arabian youths zealously devoting themselves to the study of Hebrew and Greek, competing for honors by recitation of poetry in their national fairs, and earnestly discussing deep questions of philosophy and faith. What wonder that a great intrepid and earnest spirit like Mahomet's should catch the national fire and give it a

definite shape and vent. I need not dilate any further. It is this view that leads me to think that the doctrine that raises them to Kingship as God's representatives, and invests them with infallible authority, is fundamentally and essentially wrong. It is needless to say, that by virtue of their great depth of nature, their greater earnestness and integrity of purpose, and their thorough self-surrender to their ideas, they place themselves, in a larger measure, under the operation of the Divine spirit, and in many cases act as "seers," by the discovery of many a precious truth. Yet we should sternly set our faces against a doctrine, which by teaching men to regard them as divine authority in matters of faith, tends to consecrate error, lower conscience, corrupt morals, and restrain freedom of thought. The best illustration of what I mean, is to be found in the fact, that Mr. Sen shaved himself in imitation of Chaitanya, baptised himself in imitation of Jesus; and hurled curses on his enemies in imitation of Mahomet. He would not have certainly done so, if he had not first raised his prototypes, by an erroneous doctrine, into the rank of Divine guides and then undertaken to find out the deep and hidden meanings of all their sayings and doings. If such is the case with him, how much more terrible and fatal would be the influence of this doctrine on others, and let the man-worship movement bear witness on behalf of this apprehension.

The flag ceremony.—Next after the communion of Saints comes the consecration of the banner of the New Dispensation. Let me quote the words of the *Sunday Mirror* of January 30th 1881.

"Every faithful Brahmo and member of the New Dispensation was exhorted to vow his allegiance to this banner of regenerated and saving theism. Accordingly, on the evening of the annual festival held on Sunday last, the prominent object, noticed by the congregation was a handsome crimson silk banner, mounted upon a

silver pole, fixed on the open space of marble pavement in front of the pulpit. After the Sunkertun at sunset, began the ceremony announced before, of unfurling the flag of the New Dispensation: A new form of evening worship called *Arati* was first gone through."

* * * The worshippers held each a lighted candle in his hand creating a brilliant and picturesque *effect*. Dozens of musical instruments, from the English bugle and gong to the traditional conch shell, were loudly and simultaneously performed upon. The varied and deafening peals issuing from these instruments, combined with the voices of scores of men, who stood up and went round in a circle with the burning tapers in their hands, heartily chanting the *Arati* hymn, produced upon the immense crowd, present, an *effect* which must be felt to be described."

Only two things the *Mirror* forgets to mention. Mr. Sen himself fanned this banner in the orthodox idolatrous fashion with the *chamur*, and also kissed it as I am credibly informed; whilst many of the followers touched it, as a mark of their fealty, and bowed before it, although it has been said afterwards that in so doing they did not bow to the flag but to God.

I need scarcely enter into any thing like a serious discussion about the introduction of this ceremony. I do not know whether I should take notice of the thoroughly childish argument, that the English have their flags, the French have their flags and so on, why should not the New Dispensation which has obtained such signal victories against sin and unbelief should have one? Nations have their banners to form a rallying centre in the battle field and for many other purposes, am I to believe that the same necessity there exists, even in the case of a religious society, whose sole business is, or at least should be, to preach and propagate the Kingdom of Heaven, which is always *within*, and is essentially of a moral and spiritual nature? Of course it serves one purpose—viz to produce effect, as will be seen from the italicised words in the above extract. But it is not a very noble or worthy purpose after all for a religious body.

IV. The ceremony of the Eucharist—This ceremony was performed, in imitation of the Christian Sacrament, on the 6th of March 1881. I quote a full description of it from the first number of the *New Dispensation*, Mr. Sen's own paper.

"On Sunday, the 6th March, the ceremony of adapting the sacrament to Hindu life was performed, with due solemnity, in accordance with the principle above set forth. The Hindu apostles of Christ, gathered after prayer in the dinner hall, and sat upon the floor upon bare ground. Upon a silver plate was Rice, and in a small gogiet was Water, and there were flowers and leaves around both. The minister (Mr. Sen) read the following verses from Luke XXII:—

"And he took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.

"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you.

A prayer was then offered, asking the Lord to bless the sacramental rice and water:—

Touch this rice and this water, O Holy Spirit, and turn their grossly material substance into sanctifying spiritual forces, that they may upon entering our system be assimilated to it as the flesh and blood of all the saints, in Christ Jesus. Satisfy the hunger and thirst of our souls with the rich food and drink thou hast placed before us. Invigorate us with Christ-force and nourish us with saintly life.

The Lord blessed the rice and He blessed the water.

And these were then served in small quantities to those around, and men ate and drank reverently, and the women and children also ate and drank, and they blessed God, the God of prophets and saints."

I reserve the comments for the present. Only one thing requires to be mentioned in this connection. This ceremony seems to be taking a permanent place amongst the followers of Mr. Sen; as Mr. P. C. Moozoomder, one of the missionaries of Mr. Sen, performed it again, the other day, at Simla, before his departure from that hill-station.

V. The hom ceremony—The following extract from the *New Dispensation* will give the reader an exact idea of the thing.

“On Tuesday last the Sanctuary (a room in Mr. Sen’s house), witnessed a new and imposing, and we may add, an instructive spectacle. There was a large iron fire-pan in front of the Vedi (pulpit); in an earthen vessel was ghee or clarified butter; bundles of sticks and pieces of fire-wood were gathered in one place, and there was a large metallic spoon. Varieties of beautiful and fragrant flowers and evergreens in abundance formed a semi-circle skirting the place where these things were arranged. No one was prepared for such a sight, as none even among the select few who were present knew what was going to happen. After the introductory portion of the Service was over, the minister (Mr. Sen) invoked Divine blessing on the Ceremony which was to be performed, and prayed that *it might become profitable unto the Church*. He then lighted up the fuel before him, and, pointing over it clarified butter produced a brisk Fire, which he thus addressed :—

O Thou Blazing Agni, (fire) Great great art thou, great among the forces in creation. We shall honor thee and magnify thee because of thy greatness and majesty. *Thou art not God. We do not adore thee. But in thee dwells the Lord, the Eternal Inextinguishable Flame, the Light of the Universe, the immanent Fire, Fire of fire, whom fire doth reveal and glorify. O thou brilliant Agni, in thee we behold our Resplendent Lord*” and so on.

Then followed a prayer to God, after which the minister cast the six pieces of fuel into the burning fire, the congregation exclaiming together, “Victory to God, Victory to God, Victory to God.”

Comments are reserved for future.

VI. The ceremony of baptism—Let the reader also form his idea of it from the following description of the ceremony, as found in the *New Dispensation* of June 16th.

“After Service in the Tabernacle the devotees congregated in the family Sanctuary. The minister (Mr. Sen) took his seat on the *sadi*, (pulpit) and offered a short prayer to the following effect :—

“Eternal Spirit, we Thy pilgrim servants, desire to go on pilgrimage to the Jordan, in the Holy Land, for our redemption’s sake. We desire to be where, eighteen centuries ago, Jesus, Thy son, was

baptized. Gratify, Thou, our heart's longing, and guide us and cheer us in our pilgrimage.

"The devotees then formed a procession, and solemnly moved on, singing a hymn with the accompaniment of the *mridanga*, the conch shell and cymbals, till they reached the bathing ghaut of the *Kamal Sarabar*, the tank attached to the Sanctuary. The place had been decorated with flowers and evergreens, and the flag of the New Dispensation was waving in the breeze. The devotees took their seats upon the steps of the ghaut; the minister sat upon a piece of tiger's skin, stretched upon a wooden *vedi* erected for the occasion. Deep silence prevailed. It was near midday, the torrid sun burning overhead, when the minister addressed his people as follows:—

"Beloved brethren, we have come into the land of the Jews, and we are seated on the bank of the Jordan. Let them that have eyes see. Verily, verily, here was the Lord Jesus baptized eighteen hundred years ago. Behold the holy Waters wherein was the Son of God immersed. See ye here the blessed Jesus, and by his side John the Baptist, administering the rite of Baptism, and behold in the sky above the descent of the Holy Ghost. All three are here present, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, spiritually united. Pilgrim-brothers, mark their union to-day on this hallowed spot, and see how the Water shineth in celestial radiance.

O THOU GREAT VARUNA, WATER OF LIFE.

"Sacred Water, Mighty Expanse of Seas and Oceans and Rivers, we glorify thee. Thou art not God but the Lord is in thee. Thou art full of the beauty and glory of Heaven; each drop revealeth the Divine face. Thou art the Water of life. A most helpful friend art thou unto us. From the clouds above thou comest in copious showers to quench the thirst of the parched earth and to fertilize its soil. Thou fillest rivers, seas and oceans. Thou causest the dry earth to become fruitful, and thou producest plentiful harvests fruits and corn in abundance, for our nourishment. O friend of the human race, thou satisfiest our hunger, thou appeasest our thirst, thou cleasest our body and our home, and washest away filth and impurity. O thou great purifier, thou healest disease and thou givest health. Cooler and comforter, daily we bathe in thee, and feel refreshed and comforted. Ships freighted with riches float upon thy bosom, and bring us affluence from distant shores. O serene pacifier thou extinguishest all agony, and refreshest the troubled head. O true friend and benefactor, our venerable ancestors loved thee, and

honored thee, and adored thee. And to-day, as in days gone by, the Ganga, the Jamuna, the Narmada, the Godaveri, the Kaveri, the Krishna, and all the sacred streams in the land are greatly revered by the people. Say mighty Varuna, didst thou not suggest to Buddha the idea of *Nirvana*? O thou extinguisher of the fire of all pain and discomfort. And Jesus too magnified thee, and he praised thee as none ever did before. For he saw and found in thee new life and salvation. In the holy Jordan was the Son of God baptized. We praise thee, we bless thee, Holy Water. Rain and river, lakes seas and oceans we bless and magnify.

The minister read the whole of Matthew, Chapter III., "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, &c."

He explained the true secret of Baptism thus:—

Why did Jesus plunge into the water of the river? Because he saw the water was full of God. The Omnipresent Spirit of God saw moving upon the face of the waters, and in every drop sparkled Divinity. In such holy water, in the Jordan of divine life was Jesus immersed. And as he dipped into Divinity, and straightway he came out of the water, full of new or Divine life, and the Holy Spirit overhead announced his acceptance by God as His "beloved son." Thus in him was the Father glorified, and likewise the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Behold, my brethern, the water before us is full of the Lord, and blessed are they who are baptized in it as was Jesus of Nazareth.

The minister anointed himself with flower-oil and went down into the water. Standing with his head above the water and reverently looking above he thus prayed:—May I behold Thy bright and sweet face, O God, my father, in the water that encompasses me! Convert this water into the water of grace and holiness that I may be immersed in life everlasting. May Thy beloved Son abide in my soul! May John the Baptist be here to administer unto me the sacred rite! And may Thy Holy Spirit hover over my head and inspire me!

Thus saying he thrice immersed himself, saying "Glory unto the Father," "Glory unto the Son," "Glory unto the Holy Ghost." To magnify the Three-in-one, he dipped once more saying, "Blessed be SACCHIDANANDA!—Truth, Wisdom and Joy in One!

With the water he washed his eyes and ears, his hands and feet and prayed with clasped hands:

From the very day of its foundation, the Brahmō Samâj has been consistent about one point—its protest against idolatry. It has ever preached the duty and necessity of pure spiritual worship of God. It is a common remark with intelligent idolaters, that in bowing before the idol they do not worship it, but they worship God—who as an Omnipresent Being resides in it. Does not Mr. Sen follow the same argument when he offers his thanksgivings to fire or water and says—“thou art not God, but in thee dwells the Lord.” Is not such practice half-way to idolatry? Alas! many of us have caused terrible misery to our friends and relatives, for refusing to bend our necks to any material object, and for advocating the spiritual worship of God. Many of us have been persecuted, excommunicated, and banished from home and family. The mother’s heart-rending wailings have not yet subsided in many houses. Could we but sit before the fire, thinking God dwells there, or bathe in the fashion our friends have done, in compliance with the requests of our friends and relatives, all this misery and wailing could be at once ended. But such a practice we look upon as deviation from the grand mission of the Brahmō Samâj,—viz to teach the people of this country the pure and *spiritual* worship of God. It is a matter of deep sorrow indeed, that these concessions should have been made to idolatry by the New Dispensation, after so many years of preaching and experience. Let the reader also particularly notice that portion of the above extracts, where Mr. Sen prays, that these ceremonies “might become profitable unto the Church,” which clearly indicates that these rites were intended for the Church, and are not so unimportant as some represent.

As regards the introduction of these rites and ceremonies, let me state our views as clearly as possible, for it involves a question of vital importance, affecting the very mission of the Brahmō Samâj. History will tell the

intelligent reader, that all the Hindu religious sects, without exception, have always tended to two great errors; first (1) to *mysticism*, as far as the subjective side of religion was concerned; (2) secondly, to *formalism*, as regards the objective side of it. These mistaken conceptions of piety have produced most baneful results. In the first place, (1) they have taught the people to regard religion as something apart from life, thereby causing a fatal separation between religion and individual moral conduct; (2) secondly, they have diverted the attention of all real aspirants after piety, from the fields of reform and active philanthropy, to the observance of lifeless forms; (3) thirdly, they have left the relations of life without the sanctifying influence of religious faith. It is the mission of the Brahmo Samâj to cure and correct these tendencies. It seems, that Mr. Sen, was, in the beginning, inspired by the spirit of that mission. But the circumstances that seem to have caused a perversion in this respect, are the following. As a matter of fact, the Brahmo Samâj is almost entirely recruited from the ranks of Hindus, the devoutly disposed amongst whom, as a general rule, are deeply imbued with these mystic and ritualistic notions of piety. Consequently, no sooner did Mr. Sen assume the position of a leader, than he found himself daily surrounded by a class of men, whose opinions and sentiments were deeply saturated with these conceptions of piety. Mr. Sen not having a very definite and clear conviction of his own, on the subject, could not but be silently influenced by these opinions. He was naturally and unconsciously led to conform to their ideas and answer their expectations. The consequence was, that he rose in the estimation of this class as a saint and devotee, but as far as the proper mission of the Brahmo Samâj was concerned, he departed further and further every year from his original lines. The effect of this relapse into the national errors, on the Church

as a whole, has been quite chilling and deadening, as regards every form of good work or reform. Read the internal history of the more than 140 Churches scattered all over India, and you observe an almost perfect blank with respect to acts of public usefulness or philanthropy. The few institutions of that nature we meet with in the Mofussil Samâjes, are, as a general rule, feebly kept up and receive but secondary attention. While near at home, the course of Mr. Sen's movement has been characterized by comparative paralysis of every form of social or philanthropic work, but by singularly marked and exuberant growth of every mystic conception or ritualistic practice. Witness the fate the "Indian Reform Association," which laid its hands on much really useful work, has met with; but mark the unusual development, during later years, of such things, as prolonging a prayer-meeting over five hours, singing and dancing with ringing anklets at the feet, making use of colored garments like mendicants, shaving in the fashion of Hindu anchorites, making imaginary pilgrimages to the spirits of prophets, and practising outward asceticism as great acts of virtue. I must freely and candidly confess, that many of the present members of the Sâdhâran Brahma Samâj, who formerly belonged to Mr. Sen's party and whose notions of piety were unconsciously moulded by their influence, are not yet altogether free from these erroneous conceptions. It must have struck many an English reader of our Brahma journals, belonging to both parties, that there is too much of the sentimental and mystical, and too little of the practical or philanthropic about them. But blessed be the name of God, we have grasped the true principle at last, and God helping we will abide by it in the future. India absolutely requires that piety, which will act as an elevating influence on her moral and social life; which will give her honest truth-loving characters, good peaceful homes, and a purer society, whence injustice

will be banished, and where following truth or living according to conscience will be no longer difficult; which will teach her men and women to love righteousness and hate sin, to practise virtue and shun vice, as one would shun poison; which will not wait in-door till sin and suffering, hunger and nakedness, knock at the gate, but will go out in search for opportunities of doing good; which will touch and sanctify all walks of life and kindle a new moral light in this country; and which will give her freedom and righteousness, and altogether lift the weight of sin and poverty that has been pressing for centuries, upon her life. This is the piety we shall seek and promote. So help us God.

Then again the remarks about religious coquetry, in the use of these forms, and the consequent injury done to the cause of propagation of theism, which I have made under the head of eclecticism, also apply here, and I need hardly repeat them. I have simply to refer the reader to them.

Vows and asceticism.—But the ritualistic tendency of our friends of the New Dispensation does not end here. They have introduced many other things, too numerous to notice; one thing, however, I shall at this place mention. It is the custom of taking vows, in imitation of the Roman Catholic Church. Let the reader form an idea of these vows from the following description of a “vow of Poverty,” which I quote from the *New Dispensation* of April 21st of this year.

“ON Tuesday, the 15th March 1881, the Apostles of the New Dispensation were duly admitted into the Apostolic Order. As the Vow of Poverty is essential to admission to the holy order, the minister (Mr. Sen) appeared as a candidate for it, on behalf of himself and his brother-apostles. The first ceremony which was gone through, after they had all assembled outside the Sanctuary, was the washing of feet. One after another they came to the place where there was a low wooden seat, and sat upon it. The Pratipalac, (manager) who looks after their daily food, bowed, and washed the feet of the Apostles as they sat with their feet stretched upon a bason, while the Upadhaya, (another

apostle) wiped them with a towel. They then went solemnly into the Sanctuary, and took their seats. The minister bowed before the bason, then raising his head he drank out of it, and invoked God's blessing that he might become a worthy servant. He then took his seat on the Vedi (pulpit.) Christ's solemn charge to his Apostles was then read, and the first portion of the service was gone through and hymns chanted; after which the Upadhaya stood up, and received the Medal of the New Dispensation. He then as chief priest administered the vow. He presented to the minister (Mr. Sen) a Medal, which he reverently accepted and wore on his person. Then followed the presentation of a stick and a scrip, both national symbols of mendicancy. *Dressed in gairic, with head shaved, the Servant of the Apostles* (Mr. Sen) humbly received these, and asked for *alms*. Thereupon rice and vegetables were put into the small bag.

The above ceremony will also remind the reader that portion of the Bible where Jesus washes the feet of his disciples before sending them away to preach the gospel. Perhaps some remarks on asceticism will not be out of place. It is not at all a new thing in this country; rather looking to the view of the world, universally prevalent amongst all the sects in this country, it seems to be a legitimate result of the development of religious thought. All the sects, and schools of thought in India, almost without exception, believe in the doctrine of *maya*, which regards this world as a delusion and snare, and all the desires that bind men to this world as fatal propensities. "Who is thy wife, and who thy son"; cries the great Sankara, "the world is a wonderful delusion," In strict obedience to his view of the world this great intellectual luminary of India, was an earnest preacher of the doctrine of *Sannyas* or perfect renunciation of the world. Buddha's earnest struggle, during the 12 years of probation in the forest, was in fact an unceasing inquiry into the question—how to vanquish the powers of the world and to be above its delusions and desires. This dark and dismal view of the world, and of the cravings of the flesh, was also very prevalent in the Romish Church during the middle ages;—which led the "God-intoxicated" Thomas a Kempis to sigh in these words, "What return shall I

make to thee for this grace? For it is not granted to all to forsake all, to renounce the world, and to undertake a life of religious retirement." It was this wrong view of the world, which led these pious men, to inflict many sufferings on their bodies. Many a noble instinct of the soul was ruthlessly crushed; all those sweet ties that bind man to man and make human society so pleasing and agreeable, were mercilessly broken; and the sacred and binding duties of life were often ignored. As if in their inability to shake off that unwelcome companion of the soul—the physical body,—men wreaked their vengeance upon it by torture and mutilation, and considered those acts as acceptable service to God.

Our view of the world is quite otherwise. We no longer look upon it as a delusion or a snare, or a dungeon where the soul lives in penal servitude. It is to our eyes a nursery or a preparatory stage of existence, where a kind and merciful Father has placed us for education and development. It has been beautifully adapted to the moral and spiritual culture of the human soul, during the first stage of its existence. Our view being such the primary cause of all asceticisms is removed. We cannot practise it as a renunciation of the world; but is there any other cause that can lead us to adopt it as a rule of religious life? I can well imagine the case of an earnest person, sincerely struggling with momentous spiritual difficulties, and temporarily neglecting the interests of his body, or of a penitent soul, over-powered with shame and remorse, temporarily denying himself, out of sheer agony of spirit, all the comforts of life; but when such privations are adopted as rules of spiritual life I can not but regard it as a sad and serious mistake. For it is true piety,—the real kingdom of Heaven in our hearts,—that we seek and no unnecessary infliction on the body. And where is true piety to be sought? Certainly not in shaving the head in a

particular fashion, in besmearing the body with ashes, in wearing the mendicant's garments, in bearing a stick or scrip, in making a mockery of poverty by begging alms in one's own house, and of his own family and friends, or in cooking one's own food, but in strict and unflinching fidelity to truth, in warm and active love of mankind, in burning and enthusiastic love of justice, in natural and instinctive dread of wrong, in humble and unostentatious practice of virtue, in modest forgetfulness of self, in earnest and soul-pervading love of God, and above all in faithful obedience to His will. Briefly stated true piety consists in loving God and doing His will, everything else besides being regarded as a matter of perfect indifference to it. Neither *sensualism* nor *asceticism* can be its aim or object. Yet when called upon by duty and the will of the Father, the truly pious man cheerfully submits to greater privations and sufferings than the best of ascetics or self-tormentors ever did.

Besides external asceticism, when practised as a part of spiritual exercise, just fails to attain the object it has in view. Instead of humiliating the soul, it fills it with a false self-satisfaction and spiritual pride, diverts the eyes of the spirit from the internal to the external, and sets up false standards of spiritual and moral excellence;—thereby leading its votaries to neglect the principles of real morality. It is a matter of deep regret that after so many years of healthy preaching our friends of the New Dispensation should have fallen into these palpable mistakes.

Adesh or Divine Command.—Another point of difference is the doctrine of *Adesh* or Divine command. It is a morbid development of the doctrine of *Inspiration*. Let me first try to give the reader an idea of the latter doctrine. In the year 1873 Mr. Sen delivered a lecture on "Inspiration" in which the following passage occurs.

"Then is man said to be inspired when God breathes into him his holy spirit and enkindles in him the fire of divine life, as a response to his earnest prayers."

Further on he very beautifully describes :—

“An attitude of reverent humility and self-consecration, an attitude of childlike trust and meekness, an attitude indicative of a deep consciousness of weakness and a strong sense of the necessity of Divine aid—such an attitude is prayer. . . . Directly the soul assumes this position towards heaven, directly it comes into this latitude and longitude of the spiritual world, the rays of the Eternal sun of righteousness fall upon it and enlighten it.”

The above two extracts clearly point to a spiritual law—the law of prayer. Like the growth of a plant the growth of the human soul is also two-sided. There is the sap coming from beneath and there are the light and air coming from above—the prayer or aspiration going up from man and the grace or inspiration coming down from God; and its effect is “the enkindling in man of the fire of divine life,” as Mr. Sen very happily puts it. Let me further explain this doctrine—for it inculcates a sacred and important truth. Compare the soul of man to a water-mill and the grace of God to the running stream. Like the running waters god’s saving purpose is ever present by the human soul; but as no mere placing of the mill by the water-side is sufficient for the purposes of action, a particular arrangement of the wheels and machinery being necessary;—and as unless that is effected the waters may beat as strongly as ever against it yet there will be no action; similarly unless the soul assumes that particular attitude towards God, the attitude of childlike trust, as Mr. Sen describes it, the manifestations of Divine grace are not properly felt. And what are those manifestations, but the enkindling of divine life within, leading to the regeneration of the inward nature.

This natural view of the action of the spirit of God on the soul of man, was what we all once understood by inspiration. Yet there is another view of Inspiration. To every pious and faithful soul, every act impelled by a sense of duty is inseparably associated with the will of God.

Similarly every thing that is good or holy, every thing that is unalloyed by man's selfishness or unclouded by the passions of his soul, is a revelation of the Divine will. In this sense a pious and devout person, naturally accepts the dictates of duty and his perceptions of the true, the good, and the holy, as perceptions of the Divine will. But our friends of the Dispensation go further. They have begun to interpret divine command by sudden impulses of their soul and even by signs and indications in nature; as the following dialogue between Mr. Sen and God, quoted from the devotional column of the *Sunday Mirror* of 13th July, 1879 will show.

Q. "In what shape then, O God Almighty, does thy voice come to us?"

Ans. "As a clear communication of wisdom, as a quickening influence, *as an over-powering impulse*, as a strange combination of *events in life pointing to a lesson for guidance*, as sudden awaking of the whole soul to a particular duty; as *an apprehension of signs and indications in nature*."

Let the reader specially observe the italicised portions, and then in their light let him read the following lines extracted from a letter written by Mr. Sen's Missionary Conference to Mr. Tyssen in England.

"If it be said that they (the secessionists) did not see the signs wherewith the Lord sealed his injunction in the present instance, (the marriage of his daughter with the young Maharajah of Kutch Behar) it was surely their own fault. In the eternal fitness of things, (2) in the political necessities of a vast and infant native State, (3) in the peculiar recommendations of a model minor prince, (4) in the pressing overtures of the representatives of Her Majesty's Government, (5) in the exceptional and paramount considerations which regulate royal marriages, (6) in the superior claims of the spirit over the Law, and above all in the over-ruling decrees of a living Providence, every man of faith and prayer recognized indications of Heaven's approval?"

One thing must be very clear to the thoughtful reader. We are told for instance, that (1) because the political

necessities of the Kuch Behar State demanded a speedy marriage, (2) because the minor prince had peculiar recommendations, (3) because Lord Lytton's Government pressed him to celebrate the marriage before the Rajah's departure for England, (4) because the exceptional consideration of leaving a wife to adopt an heir to the State, in case of the Raja's death in England, was felt to be paramount, Mr. Sen at once interpreted his *impulse* in favour of the match as a Divine Command and submitted to the overruling decrees of Providence, waiving the considerations of the Law, with the pious consolation, that the spirit is always superior to the Law.

Hence I infer that the present view of *Adesh* or Divine Command, advocated by the New Dispensation simply means this—In every case of some difficulty, whether a matter of pure reason, or of conscience, the impulse you feel after prayer, if further supported by combination of events in life or by signs and indications in nature, accept as an indication of Divine command. And it needs scarcely be remarked, that such signs and indications are seldom wanting, when the mind is bent upon finding them.

Further illustration of this view of Divine Command will be found in the following incident, which an apostle of the New Dispensation once related to the present writer. This apostle brother was once residing on the Simla hills; whence he felt an impulse to go down and be present at the anniversary of the Lahore Samâj. He took it as a Divine impulse. But soon after this, he read in a number of the *Sunday Mirror* that another apostle had been appointed by his friends in Calcutta to proceed to Lahore. This puzzled him a little. He again pressed it in his prayers. The original impulse remained. Then he came down, and to his utter astonishment came to learn, that the brother apostle who had started from Calcutta, was detained

by illness on his way. This impulse, supported by the unexpected detention of the brother-apostle, left no doubt in his mind as to its Divine character.

Far be it from me to scoff at these devout interpretations of the Divine will. They prove above all a sincere anxiety to know the Divine will and an anxious solicitude for submission to that will. I might silently and reverently overlook such a tendency in a pious friend, rather than choose to disturb the quiet enjoyment of his faith; and perhaps I might love and pity him the more for it; but when a theory like this is raised into a settled doctrine of the Church, and when departure or difference from such individual pious impulses is stigmatised, as "the impotent and feeble protest of man's self sufficient reason against the economy of Providence," (Vide Mr. Sen remarks quoted before) I feel disposed to cry out, "hold, hold, you are virtually teaching us to abrogate the functions of reason and conscience, and deify an unregulated impulse as the sovereign of the soul;—which course is sure to be fruitful of many evils, and not unfrequently of terrible mistakes. Ultimately it may lead to a state of things similar to that described in the following lines from a resolution of the Government of Bengal.

"Intimation was received by the Commissioner of Orissa, on the 9th March last, that a party of fanatics, consisting of twelve men and three women, had entered the temple of Jagannath in Puri on 1st idem, with the object of burning the idol of Jagannath, and that a disturbance had taken place, in which one of the fanatics had lost his life. The party in question were residents of Sambulpore in the Central Provinces, and they stated that they were induced to come to Puri in consequence of one of their co-religionists (the deceased) *having been commanded by their "Guru as invisible being without shape or form, to bring the images of Jagannath, Balaram, and Subhadra out of the temple and to burn them on the road."*

Loyalty.—Like the communion of saints loyalty to the reigning sovereign also forms an essential and funda-

mental article of faith in the creed of the New Dispensation. The following lines from the first number of the *New Dispensation*, will give the reader an idea of the loyalty of the New Dispensation.

"The earthly sovereign is God's representative, and must therefore have our allegiance and homage. We look upon Victoria as our Queen Mother and we are politically her children. * * * Therefore, we love her and honor her, and consider loyalty to be as sacred as filial obedience. A man who hates his sovereign is morally as culpable as he who abhors and maltreats his father or mother. Sedition is rebellion against the authority of God's representative and therefore, against God."

This is the old and exploded doctrine of the Divine right of Kings. What do our friends mean by the word sovereign? Is it the particular person, who sits upon a throne, for the time being, or is it that power in a nation, essentially representing the people, and upheld by popular voice, which is the proper guardian of law, order and justice? If it is the former, the doctrine is foolish in the extreme, and in many cases would amount to this;—that in the midst of crumbling dynasties and the conflict of power, whatever fortunate adventurer succeeds in usurping the throne, and in establishing himself there, is to be looked upon as Heaven's representative, and ungrudging submission to him, as a person, is a primary and cardinal virtue, in all cases and all conditions, and should be regarded as a fundamental principle of religion. If it is the latter, then loyalty to a sovereign means loyalty to law, order and justice and the power which lawfully represents them in a country. This view of the question is sure to engage the concurrence of every thoughtful mind. And it is this view, which leads every sensible man to set his face against all violent attempts, made by individuals or classes, against the established law and order of a country, under the deluded impression that such attempts are remedies for existing political evils, however much he may sympathize with the

justice or reasonableness of some of their demands. Loyalty to Law and Order, is a sound principle of action with every educated mind.

Politics is beyond the sphere of operations of the Brahmo Samâj. Yet when our friends go the length of making it an important article of faith, we must at once tell the Brahmo-reader, that in politics we are for representative Government by the people themselves *i.e.*, a Government where laws are made and the country is governed not for them but by them. But how far this abstract principle bear application to the present needs and circumstances of this country, is a question we have not much thought about, and are not in a position to decide. We rather incline to believe that this country is not yet ripe for real representative Government on any large scale, and in its proper sense. But every step towards the attainment of that ultimate good commands our sympathy and moral support. Then, as regards the present government, it has many claims on our love and gratitude; in the first place, for having taught us, and having created these aspirations in our breasts, for having been instrumental in dispelling the darkness of superstition and prejudice, for having established peace and good government, for having developed the material resources of the country by encouraging commerce, for having facilitated the intercourse of the races by opening new channels of communication, for having taught us a language which not only helps us in interchanging our thoughts but places us in communication with the civilization of the West, for having boldly tried to grapple with ignorance, pestilence, and famine; for having graciously accorded to the people the privileges of free speech, and the rights of free conscience, and for having directly and indirectly admitted the people of this country into a political school, the best of its kind perhaps, for learning those very arts of self-government, which alone

can permanently confer upon a people the blessings of representative rule. It is natural for a pious heart to mark the hand of Providence in these blessings, and also in all the important moral and spiritual results directly and indirectly flowing from this political connection; but surely it is foolishness to build this sentiment into an essential article of faith, and then again to give it such an objectionable form. I half suspect, that the New Dispensation creed in this respect, is exactly similar to its doctrine of "Greatmen". It evidently springs from that essentially erroneous conception, that the *King*, and not the *people*, is the source of political power;—the sovereign being God's representative on earth. People who advocate their theory of "Greatmen," are sure to advocate autocracy in politics, Popery in matters of faith, aristocracy or spiritual hierarchy in Church government, and the rightful tyranny of man over woman in society. Consistently enough, it is to one and all of these that our friends of the New Dispensation are daily drifting. The truth of this is already partly borne out by previous facts, and will be further manifest as we proceed.

Female Emancipation.—The question of Female Education and Female Emancipation is another point on which we differ. It has been a subject of controversy in the Brahmo Samāj for a pretty long time, as the reader has been already informed in the previous history. It is a well-known fact that many of the leading members of the Sadbaran Brahmo Samāj have been earnestly and steadily trying, since sometime past, to give their women the advantages of higher education, and more extended social intercourse with the other sex, than is allowed under the present custom of female seclusion in Bengal. This our friends consider to be too dangerous an experiment; and under this impression they have never been slack or remiss in crying it down by means fair and foul. As for

themselves, they are very much opposed to the commingling of the sexes, as will be best manifest from the following lines from the first number of the *New Dispensation* :—

“Those who are trying the dangerous experiment of female emancipation in these days of scepticism and carnality had better be warned in time. To all devout Hindus, to all Christian men and women in this country, our humble prayer is that they should try to prevent the indiscriminate commingling of the sexes. Zenana seclusion, as it is, cannot and should not continue long. It is an evil, and all right thinking men must proscribe it as such. To immure woman in a cell, where neither the physical nor the moral light of heaven can enter, and where she is doomed to spiritual slavery and wretchedness, is an unpardonable invasion of human liberty, against which both religion and civilization protest. Give the Indian woman freedom. But let it be moral freedom; not license to do evil and go into paths of temptation and carnality, but freedom to serve God and to do that which is right and proper.”

The doctrine advocated in the above extract when properly understood means this;—the worst feature of the present custom of immuring woman in the zenana is that she is debarred from the “moral light of Heaven” and “doomed to spiritual slavery and wretchedness.” Give her that moral light, make her mind free from that spiritual thralldom, give her freedom to serve God and discharge her duties well; but do not allow her the liberty of moving freely in society; either let her continue, with respect to mingling with the other sex, as she is now, or which almost amounts to the same thing, make her company exceedingly limited and select.

The strict and almost jealous care, with which Mr. Sen and his friends generally screen their ladies, not only from the gaze of strangers, but also from that of many of their friends and co-religionists, throws further light upon this opinion, and shows that in this respect they are not much above the level of popular prejudice.

Now, this view of female education naturally suggests a number of questions. We feel inclined to ask,—whether

the idea of giving the light of knowledge and yet denying the gratification of the legitimate desire of more extended experience, is self-consistent and reasonable? (2)—whether real freedom of thought will not necessarily and almost inevitably lead to aspirations after social liberty? (3) whether that real freedom of mind is at all attainable without varied experience, and the contact with other minds? (4) whether any thing like real education is at all possible under such restrictions? (5) whether the extremely restricted limits we prescribe for them will allow them sufficient scope to make themselves really useful to God and man, as our friends think it desirable that they should do. I do not stop to discuss all these various questions, nor do I propose to weigh in an even balance the respective rights of men and women in society, but I do earnestly protest against the grievous wrong done to those, who advocate Female Emancipation, by saying, that they are for precipitating woman to her ruin, by helping her to tread the path of vice—or encouraging her in the license of doing wrong. They base all their efforts, let it be distinctly understood, upon a solemn conviction,—that woman as she is situated in this country, cannot fulfill her destiny, cannot properly discharge her sacred function in society. She absolutely requires two things, (1) *education*, (2) *the liberty of moving freely in society*. Indeed, much of the unattractiveness of our homes, the corruption of our manners, the want of culture of the finer virtues, the depression of social purity, the low state of conjugal morality amongst men, the conservative tenacity of many wrong customs, nay, even the deterioration of the physical and moral health of our children, consequently of the people at large, through generations, can be safely attributed to two causes; the *ignorance* and *social seclusion* of woman. Liberty without the regulating balance of sound moral culture is as much injurious to man as to woman. Yet women as well as men,

must have opportunities of observation and information, of comparison and emulation, of mistake and correction, of struggle and victory, before those qualities of character can be properly developed in them, which alone can make them really useful in their respective spheres. Do the same for your women as you would do for your men. Train them up to principles of piety and morality, to habits of thought and right action, and they will avoid the wrong and seek the right, as hundreds of us, men, are daily doing, in spite of the widest possible liberty we enjoy. Enkindle in them the divine life, and the life will be light unto their eyes. Let all our educational agencies be an operation, to imprint on the minds of the rising generations of our youth, both male and female, sound moral principles, principles that would stand them in good stead in the actual combat of life; and then allow them scope and sphere to make themselves useful to God and man. What the members of the Sadharan Brahma Samâj are doing for the elevation and emancipation of women will be stated hereafter. For the present let the reader briefly know, that along with the efforts for giving their wives and daughters more extended social intercourse, the members of the Sadharan Brahma Samâj are not unmindful of the other and higher duty of giving them sound intellectual and moral education. They are principally supporting a Boarding School for higher education of Females under government, by sending their girls; they have organised a Ladies' Association intended for the intellectual and moral improvement of their women; and hold special services for females, where the ministers and missionaries of the Samâj are every now and then called upon to preach. These efforts in the direction of lifting the weight from the lot of woman have been characterized by our friends as dangerous. Those who are engaged in this difficult work of reform, know that such an experiment, cannot but be attended with occasional cases of wrong-do-

ing and license, but they have fixed their eyes upon a principle and will not swerve from their duty for any amount of opposition from the other side. May God grant, that through their humble exertions a better day may dawn upon women in India.

Church-government.—The last point of difference with which I shall close my present list of differences is one of vital importance. It is the question of Church-government. Our idea of a Church is, that it is a family of God's worshippers, where the abuse or misappropriation of all power by one or a few is impious. The Church is essentially a common-wealth and should be governed by the voice of all God's children. But the New Dispensation idea is quite otherwise. Let the *Sunday Mirror* of November 13th 1881 speak for itself.

"Religious leaders are expected to speak with authority—an authority received from heaven. The very ring of earnestness and sincerity which characterises their utterances, proves that the voice with which they speak is not theirs. It follows therefore, that ignorance of God gives no title to vote; and such ignorance is the distinguishing trait of the majority of a community. To talk of a democracy in matters transcendental is to attain the height of the ludicrous. Our opinion is that a church should be eminently aristocratic, and not democratic. We use the word "aristocratic" in its liberal sense, meaning of the best. In other words, those that speak with authority are the only persons fit to give laws to the church, and the uneducated are required, by slow progress and education, to attain the standard of the leaders. The New Dispensation has come down to establish just such an aristocracy in the world."

Read also the following prayer of Mr. Sen, extracted in the Theistic Quarterly Review of March, 1879.

"They tell me, O Heavenly Father, to act according to their councils. They tell me that I should not be so proud and conceited as to seek the light of heaven directly, but should humbly abide by the decision of my best and most intelligent friends, and follow the salutary advice of enlightened councils and committees. Father, this Thy child cannot do, for Thou hast trained him differently. I cannot follow men, for I do not understand their language. Their words are a puzzle to me, and their instruction but confusion. Thy language is neither Hebrew nor Sanskrit. Thy voice clear-sounded, O God, and let me hear Thee continually."

Let the reader carefully mark the several steps of the argument. He alone, who can speak with *authority*, derived from God, is fit to vote; and as the majority are men, who receive no inspiration from God and, therefore, cannot speak with authority, they are not fit to vote; their business being simply to hear and obey and try to rise to the standard of the leaders. It of course follows, that in as much as the majority have no right to vote, the election of these leaders does not depend on them. The authority by which they rule is absolutely derived from God; or they confer it upon themselves. Then mark, Mr. Sen distinctly declares, that by his training and mental habits he is incapable of abiding by the decision of Committees. Let the reader also remember the extract quoted before, where he declares himself as a perennially and perpetually inspired person. And it is quite patent to reason, why he should not at all seek the counsels of men. This very disregard of the voice of others, according to the *Mirror*, gives him the title to rule. I do not find fault with my friends of the New Dispensation, for giving expression to their views, but I am anxious that the reader should grasp their real meaning.

Having enabled the reader to do so, I should like to ask him whether the common-wealth principle in matters of Church government, is at all applicable to a body of men who hold such views, and of whom Mr. Sen is the head? Let him answer this question honestly and distinctly. For there cannot be two answers.

I now ask the reader to take note of the actual state of things in the New Dispensation Church. I shall simply mention a few facts. On reference to the old files of the *Indian Mirror* it will appear, that Mr. Sen was appointed Secretary of the Samâj, in the year 1866 or 67. (I am not quite certain about the year.) Since that time I do not know that he or any body else has been re-elected to the

post. Secondly, there is no list of members. Thirdly, there are no rules for the guidance of the Society. Fourthly, there is no Committee elected by the members to manage the affairs of the Samâj. The few efforts after constitutional organisation that the reader finds, during the three or four years preceding the second schism, were entirely due to the exertions of the present leaders of the Sâdhâran Brahmo Samâj, who were then struggling to introduce their principles into the Church.

In the absence of all constitutional checks, the whole fabric has been allowed to rest on the shoulders of Mr. Sen. Let it be here gratefully acknowledged that he has not spared himself, to render what he considered to be the best service to his Church. But as an inevitable consequence, a system of Popery has been evolved. This may sound rather hard in the ears of many, but I have facts to substantiate my charge. Let them read, then, the following extract from the *Sunday Mirror* of December 7th 1879. It represents a dialogue between Mr. Sen's Congregation and God, and is from the pen of Mr. Sen.

“Q. WE desire to know Thy intention clearly and fully regarding our relations to our minister (Mr. Sen) ?

A. There is no minister appointed but by me. Leaders of congregations are ordained by me. Therefore, treat your minister as one who hath commission from Heaven. His words ye must hear with faith and cherish with reverence.

Q. But has he not errors? * * *

A. With his unofficial position Heaven has nothing to do. If he is a bad man at home, unprincipled, selfish, ambitious, angry, deceitful, jealous, untruthful, you will not surely imitate his vices. &c &c.,

Q. How shall we then honor him? If we freely criticize his opinions and doings, and condemn whatsoever is wrong in him, his tastes and ideas and deeds, we must treat him as we treat other people, as our equals and inferiors, praising the good and censuring the evil in them ?

A. As one of you while at home, but not when in his office. His official position is different. When he ministers to your spiritual wants and offers his prayers, and directs your missionary movements and otherwise renders services for your spiritual improvement, then bow to him as your minister, and let the whole congregation adopt and follow his teachings.

Q. In what things are we to take lessons from him ?

A. In all matters appertaining to the development and success of the present Dispensation. &c.,

Q. So be it. But even in questions like these shall we follow blindly where we cannot comprehend ?

A. Not blindly but trustfully, hoping and believing that I will in the fullness of time make all things plain and clear to you. No man can fully explain the deep truths of the spirit world, unless the Holy Spirit reveals them to each individual. Therefore believe, and I will add to your faith knowledge.

Q. One question more, O Lord. If ever we think him mistaken in these important matters connected with his official position, shall we not try to convince him of his errors and dissuade him from his path ?

A. It may be you are mistaken, and not he, in these particular instances. Therefore by your remonstrances you may run the risk of tempting your minister to disobey me and transgress my will. Where he has received my command, he shall stand unmoved like a rock amid the allurements, calumny and antagonism of the world, and faithfully do my will. If ye have anything to say against him come and tell me.

Let the reader mark the several steps of the argument contained in the above extract. We are told for instance, by Mr. Sen himself, that he is a "heaven-appointed minister;" that in his official capacity he can not be criticised as one of the people; that in matters pertaining to the development of the Dispensation, his Church should adopt and follow his teachings with implicit faith; that they must believe and take things on trust, even when they do not understand, hoping that God will add knowledge to their faith; that their's is not to criticize any of his proceedings, or to try to convince him of his errors, but all that they should do on the

occasion of such unhappy differences, is to pray to God to grant them light, for it is they who are more likely to be in error, than he, who does these things by Divine Command. Does the Pope of Rome say anything more than this? Are not the two well-known papal doctrines, visible here? First, that as far his official capacity goes, the Pope is in-fallible; secondly, that the highest duty for the people is to *believe*, hoping that knowledge would be added to their faith. Is it, I now ask the reader, hard or unjust to call this system a system of Popery? Let them answer.

But wait; I have also actual facts to defend my position. I have simply to refer to Mr. Sen's missionaries. I purposely call them Mr. Sen's missionaries, for the voice of the Church is a matter of perfect indifference as regards their appointment or dismissal. Who appoints these missionaries then? who keeps them in probation? who suspends or dismisses them, when they are found guilty of any crime or fault unworthy of their vocation? I answer—Mr. Sen. I know this assertion will be stoutly resisted. For all the missionaries, according to one of their pet doctrines, are God-appointed men. I too believe that a true preacher of religion is he, who is divinely called. But when these gentlemen are accepted and passed off as missionaries of the Brahmô Samâj of India, who decides that question? Are the members (if there be members at all) ever consulted on that subject? Is it not a fact, that, if their voice had been ever consulted, many amongst the present missionaries would be thrown out by reason of their disqualification? I mean no insult to these gentlemen, all of whom are my personal friends, and many of whom I sincerely love and respect. But every earnest or devout person is not necessarily fit to be a preacher. Yet has Mr. Sen gone on appointing, suspending, and dismissing missionaries according to the divine light within him. I

need not allude to the other fact, that owing to this state of things, many, who earnestly and sincerely wished to serve their Church, and had actually given up their secular prospects, for that purpose, found it very difficult to pull on with Mr. Sen and his missionaries, in as much as their mental and moral constitutions were found to be too bony to be easily swallowed up by Mr. Sen's authority. They had to give up the thought of being recognised as missionaries of the Brahmo Samâj of India in despair. Is not this Popery? Is it any wonder after this that the present missionaries of Mr. Sen, should be men, who uphold everything he does. Many of these brethren, (mind I do not doubt their sincerity,) were chief actors, in that matter of paying super-human honors, which gave rise to the man-worship agitation; most of them again, according to certain revelations made by Pandit Bijay Krishna Goswami, have entered into a written agreement, binding themselves never to leave Mr. Sen. The exact nature of this document, which I have never seen with my own eyes, I do not know. I simply allude to it, as the fact has been made public, and has not yet been contradicted. The publication of this document, in any of the Journals of the New Dispensation, will be the best means of dispelling any wrong impression that the mention of this fact may create. Pandit Bijay Krishna Goswami, who was himself a missionary of Mr. Sen, publicly said, that there was such a document and which he himself had to sign.

However, let that pass; the reader cannot have any doubt now that the New Dispensation is not a constitutional Church, it is no Church properly so called. The whole thing rests upon the "inspired authority" of one man. Perhaps I will be doing injustice, if I do not notice Mr. Sen's "Missionary Conference." It is a self-elected Council, which is said to deliberate on Church matters,—and many and prolonged are the discussions, carried on, I am told, but there is this peculiarity about it, that all

voices at last find an easy solution into one "inspired" voice, —for not a single voice of dissent has been up to this time recorded against any of Mr. Sen's proceedings. So I leave the reader to ponder over this mockery of a constitutional Council.

As regards our views, I have already briefly told the reader, that we look upon the Church as the family of God's worshippers and a common-wealth. We do earnestly believe, that the warming influence of Divine grace is operating upon every earnest and pious soul amongst us; that every individual worshipper, nay the meanest, the poorest, the humblest, the most insignificant amongst us, has some light within him, kindled there by the finger of God, which the Church cannot safely despise; that the full torch of truth can only be formed by gathering these individual lights; that the only check on moral obliquity, favouritism, imperfect apprehension of truth, in the leaders, is the voice and conscience of the Church at large; that truth is better apprehended, and error is more surely detected by the conflict of conscience in a religious Community; that the best way of fastening the affections, and securing the active sympathy of the members of the Church in all Church affairs, is to let them know that they are brethren, and equally entitled to exercise their rights in the Father's family. Being thus persuaded, was it possible, candid reader, to pull on with men, who resisted, with might and main, the acceptance of these principles? Was it possible, I do solemnly ask you, un-informed European critic! to continue to belong to a body of which Mr. Sen was the head? Pray bear with me, when I thank God, that he enabled quite feeble hands to once more hold aloft the banner of truth and liberty. Freed from all these narrow, noisome, and almost stinking surroundings, we feel that we are at last in the midst of a free and constitutional Church, where every spiritual plant may freely grow and enjoy the

free air of heaven. But yet I cannot but deeply deplore, on behalf of our country, and on behalf of our friends who still cling to the New Dispensation, that a movement which began its course with such glorious prospects should have degenerated so soon, that the errors and aberrations of one man should have thus spoiled the work of God. Believe me reader, it is not without some degree of pain that I use these words. I feel that my attacks are levelled against one, to whom I was once fondly attached, and still am bound by ties of love and gratitude. But if he has embraced error, if he has been unconsciously misleading the Church, if through his self-sufficiency he has been spoiling the work of God, and if in doing so he now finds his breast too near my shafts, I have simply to beg his pardon, and ask him to stand aside; for my object is merely the vindication of truth. Let the reader also pardon me, for causing pain to one, who in spite of his errors and aberrations, has claims on my gratitude and respect.

Summary.—Now, reader, I have fully and faithfully described to you the leading points of difference as I understand them; and in doing so, I feel I have said nothing that is not in strict accordance with truth. I have told you, for instance, how the doctrine of dispensation secretly means the belief in a heaven-appointed leader, whose preachings and precepts constitute that dispensation;—how in the case of Mr. Sen this doctrine is applied to himself indirectly by himself, and directly by many of his followers;—how they look upon his utterances as revelations of inspired and infallible truth;—how Mr. Sen himself, considers his own self, as a singular and perennially inspired person, and looks upon all hostile criticisms of his proceedings, as protests against the dispensations of Providence;—how they make a parade of the devoutest sentiments of the heart, from which a pious soul should instinctively shrink;—how the vaunted eclecticism and solvent

character of the New Dispensation is in fact an unintelligible idea and consequently an element of weakness;—how their doctrine of Greatmen is in reality a mistaken theory of the history of nations and fruitful of many mistakes;—how their recently introduced ceremonies of Eucharist, Hom, Baptisin, &c. all tend to reduce Brahmoism into idolatry and ritualism;—how they have fallen into the lamentable error of practising outward asceticism as acts of virtue;—how the doctrine of inspiration with them means the virtual degradation of reason and conscience and the deification of an *impulse* at their expense;—how in politics they uphold the divine right of kings, in society the seclusion of woman from social life, and in church matters the authority of an infallible Pope;—how the Brahma Samâj of India is a Society without constitution and without all those legitimate checks and restraints which a popular government alone can provide. I now leave you to judge for yourself, and hasten to finish this portion of my narrative with a personal sketch of the man whose wild eccentricities we thus deeply deplore.

Personal sketch of Mr. Sen.—Throughout his career Mr. Sen has been distinguished for three things—(1) a proud and indomitable spirit—(2) a fine and powerful intellect—(3) and a strong and vigorous will. These three combined with a habit of entire self-reliance have raised him to the prominent position he now occupies. From his earliest connection with the Samâj, he stood unrivalled amongst his friends and early associates, for these eminent qualities of character. Added to these, there is an earnest, fervid and enthusiastic temperament—the first requisite of a reformer. He has also a richly endowed moral and spiritual nature, which his strong will has helped him in bringing to bear upon the movement he has been leading. Like every other proud nature, he is shy to strangers, but full of pleasant humour to friends, mild and affable to

inferiors, but haughty and untractable to the least show of superiority in others, and specially under opposition; conceiving his plans in silence, and carrying them with but half-revealed purpose. He does not condescend to take into his confidence even his immediate associates about his plans, and has no *friend* properly so called. He is not altogether above the art of over-reaching an enemy by clever shifts, or of trying to compromise him by unfair and ungenerous means. At times he is carried away by his wounded pride to use harsh and abusive epithets against his opponents. Yet he has been an example to many of us, of purity of private conduct, earnestness of purpose, and of devotedness to noble pursuits. Many of his ways have been certainly those of a man of faith; and many of the principles of action he has enunciated for his Church, show considerable depth of spiritual insight and keenness of moral perception. For these we have always admired him and do yet admire. But Mr. Sen in the meantime has allowed himself to be led astray by an unfortunate idea—the idea of his being a singularly inspired man. As a consequence of this, Mr. Sen has given up all study. He has cut off all the channels of communion with other contemporaneous minds. In his lecture on “Am I an inspired prophet” he exultingly remarks, “How can he (meaning himself) who scarcely reads two books in 365 days be reckoned wise or a learned man?” without knowing perhaps, that this cessation of communion with other minds is the cause of his later aberrations, as it was also the case with Auguste Comte, the founder of the Positivist School of philosophy. It is a moral rule, fit to be written in gold, that whoever wilfully cuts himself off from the thought of mankind, his God dooms to darkness and confusion.

For want of the check provided by a constitutional form of government, he has practically developed a form of Popery in his Church; and for a similar want of the regulat-

ing balance of communion with contemporaneous minds, he has developed an amount of self-sufficiency which is almost appalling. It seems his own self is the little world where he mostly lives and moves; as will be manifest from three facts. (1) He magnifies the most common and ordinary incidents of his life into extraordinary marks of singularity and greatness. As a proof of this, mark the following declaration in his above mentioned lecture,—“My singularity began when I was fourteen years of age. I then abstained from animal food.” What would Theodore Parker think of this, who at a very early age clearly felt that he was destined to be a minister of religion? Not to go abroad, what would the celebrated Rajah Ram Mohun Roy think of this, if he were living now, who in his sixteenth year raised the banner of revolt against idolatry and was expelled from his home? What would a whole host of others think of this, who gave many such signs of early religious precocity. Not to speak of others, I know many of my friends, who in those days to which Mr. Sen alludes in his lecture, were led by the reading of Babu A. K. Dutt’s translation of Combe’s Constitution of Man, to give up animal food at the age of thirteen and fourteen. Is this after all such a singular affair, as should lead Mr. Sen to cry within himself “what a wonderful thing I am!” (2) The second fact is, Mr. Sen cannot dismiss any commendatory remarks from his mind. As he lives and moves within his own self, these remarks come again and again to him, till he finds in them some traces of his greatness and singularity. As a proof of this read the following—which I extract from his lecture on “*We apostles of the New Dispensation.*”

“Sometime ago I remember, I was conversing with one of the most pious Christian officials in India, now an ex-Lieutenant Governor. In the course of the conversation he looked at me seriously and calmly for some moments, and said—what is it that makes you so healthy and cheerful? Is it because you have a contented soul?
* * * I have since thought over the incident and the question

has recurred to me again and again. There is evidently something in me which suggests this question and I thank God for it."

Had Mr. Sen's mind been habituated to look around and look abroad, this simple remark dropped at a casual conversation, would not certainly have lingered so long in his mind.

The third proof of Mr. Sen's making his own self his little world is to be found in the fact, that he not only magnifies his performances, he also magnifies his sufferings. —Listen to what he says about these sufferings.

"My infatuated critics and cruel persecutors will perhaps go on and would not stop. Already they have tormented my heart and burnt my bones with the fire of persecution. * * For nearly a quarter of a century have I suffered reviling and calumny, and altogether the shades in my life are awfully dark and dismal." —Lecture on "We Apostles of the new Dispensation."

The news-paper fire of hostile criticism, which is almost inseparable from public life, would not have certainly assumed such magnitude in Mr. Sen's eyes, had it not been for his exclusive confinement to his own thoughts. Is it any wonder after this that he should look upon his impulses, as the whisperings of divine Providence, and his commonplace thoughts as the immortal productions of his genius and originality? I stop here, and in taking leave of this man,—whose many sterling qualities of character we all admire,—whose preachings and example have given an impetus to so many minds,—many of whose utterances have now and then actually communicated many a precious moral and spiritual truth,—to whom the present writer personally owes a debt of love and gratitude, in taking leave of this man I feel, I once more repeat, that we have been compelled by his own conduct and by a sense of our duty to our Church, to seek other and more congenial spheres of thought and action—though very much against our previous resolution.

THE SĀDHĀRAN BRAHMO SAMĀJ.

Now I shall call your attention, patient reader, to the short history of the rise and progress of another institution which God has called into existence, to vindicate truth, to uphold the cause of human freedom, to preach and propagate the purity of spiritual worship, to save the Brahmo Samāj from the corruptions of mysticism, popery, and ritualism, and to help towards the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness in this land. For, certainly it is a will higher than man's, which is imperceptibly moulding all our individual destinies into a grand and progressive destiny—viz., the good of His Church. I do firmly believe, that every truly earnest soul amongst us, has been called by God and is being consciously or unconsciously led by His spirit. The previous history must have told you, how the career of the Samāj, through many vicissitudes of fortune, and even through periods of temporary weakness and degeneracy, has been one of continued progress; how by a principle of natural selection, as it were, it has been enabled, to discard error and assimilate truth; how from thought it came to *spiritual life*, and from spiritual life to *active reform*,—till it has made itself a powerful agency of social and moral progress in this country;—and how it has lighted up the torch of truth in this land of darkness and superstition, presenting better views of God, man and the world to our countrymen. These are unfailing signs, which clearly indicate that the spirit of God lives and breathes within it. We trustfully resign ourselves to the guidance of this Spirit, and follow the light vouchsafed unto us through the conscience.

The Sadharan Brahmo Samāj was duly organised by a formal resolution passed at a public meeting held on the

15th of May, 1878 ; consequently, it has barely lived three years and a few months up to this time. The circumstances that led to its birth have been already related, and I shall not detain the reader any longer upon them. I proceed without further delay to lay before him, a brief survey of its principles and work classified under three heads ;—(1) *Spiritual* (2) *Constitutional* (3) *Practical*. But in doing so I should ask him to bear in mind, that the Sadharan Brahmo Samâj is yet but a young and infant Society, and that all its capacities of faith and work have not yet been properly developed ; consequently he is not to entertain very high expectations about its performances, during the short period of its existence.

Under the head of spiritual comes first the enunciation of its principles. The principles as laid down by Rule II of the Samaj and as enumerated in its covenant, to which the signature of every intending member is required, are four.

- (1) Belief in the existence of an infinite Creator.
- (2) Belief in the immortality of the soul.
- (3) Belief in the duty and necessity of spiritual worship of God.
- (4) Disbelief in any infallible book or man, as the means of salvation.

These were all that could be laid down within the necessarily short compass of a rule ; but a fuller exposition of our views and principles seems to be necessary, with a view to give the reader a clearer idea of the aim and scope of the whole movement. I shall briefly state them, *as far as I understand them*.

1st. We believe, that this Universe has sprung from, and is sustained and governed by, the will of a Supreme and self-existent Being, infinite in power, wisdom, love, justice and holiness. His Providence is ever-active, special

as well as universal. By reason of his infinitude and uniqueness, He is beyond our conception, but certainly not beyond our *knowledge* and faith. We cannot conceive or comprehend him except but partially through his manifestations in nature and in man, but by means of our reason, and instinct, faith and intuition, we can sufficiently *know Him*, to believe in *Him* and to worship him, in faith and spirit.

2nd. We believe that man by virtue of his peculiar moral and spiritual constitution, and of the peculiar privileges consequent upon that constitution, and also by reason of his conscious relationship with that Divine love and justice, is the son of God, and as such is fit to know Him and love Him, which is man's highest destiny, and to serve Him, which is his highest privilege.

3rd. We believe that worship or conscious moral and spiritual intercourse with this Father, consisting of an attitude of love, gratitude, trust, and reverence, is a most sacred and solemn duty on man's part, and the way to his salvation.

4th. By salvation we mean that state of perfect union of the son with the Father, where there is no extinction or annihilation of his separate entity as a *child*, nor absorption into the supreme Being, but perfect harmony between his *will* and the will of the Father, through *love* and *self-surrender*. It is both *negative* and *positive*. Negatively it means *liberation* from sin and misery, and positively a state of felicity consequent upon a conscious life in God.

5th. We believe that the way to this salvation is not through *pantheism*, which regards sin and misery as delusions, nor through *asceticism*, which aspires to uproot the *desires* and subjugate the body, but through *love*, which teaches the soul to seek the will of the Father as the

highest good. It does not snatch the soul away from temptations, nor violently uproots the desires, but places it above them and beyond them by making them matters of indifference to its purpose or aim.

6th. We believe that man is destined for eternal existence, of which his life on earth is but the first and the preparatory stage; that he is morally accountable for his conduct; and that there is no escape in the future from the consequences of his acts in the present. The punishment of sin is sure and inevitable, and forgiveness with God means the permission of spiritual restoration.

7th. But we do not imagine any material Heaven or Hell. There may be worlds and spheres, where human souls find themselves placed during the several stages of their progress and development after death, but Heaven and Hell with us are not *places*, but *states*. By *Heaven* we mean the *joy* consequent upon knowing and loving the Father, and upon being allowed to hold unclouded intercourse with Him;—this being the highest reward of virtue; and by *Hell* we mean that miserable state, where the soul is made unworthy of intercourse with God, and finds delight in unrighteousness;—which also is the worst punishment of sin.

8th. We do believe that not only out-ward morality as recognized by society, but also the purity of the inward nature, producing singleness of mind and holiness of intention, is one of the first conditions of proper spiritual intercourse with God, and that the attainment of this holiness should be a matter for earnest prayer.

9th. By *sin* we understand the *conscious* and *willful commission* or indulgence of a deed, thought, or desire, which leads the soul away from the Divine will, and also the *conscious* and *willful omission* of any deed, thought or desire, which leads us towards the Divine will.

10th. By Divine will we understand that universal, eternal and constant action of the Divine spirit, which,

under given conditions, is manifested in different shapes and proportions, through our reason, conscience, affections and will. When it breathes through the *reason*, it is *wisdom*, enabling us to perceive the *true*; when flowing through the conscience it is *virtue*—giving us a sense and knowledge of *the right*; when operating through the *affections*, it is *love*, leading us to seek the *good of others*; and when influencing the will it is *courage*—giving us firmness to stand upon *duty*. The conditions of the action of this Divine will are *love* and *self-surrender*. Man's highest excellence can only be attained through submission to this ever-active law of righteousness and departure from it is his degradation and misery.

✓ 11th. We do not believe that man is a sinner by birth, but becomes so by his conscious and wilful commissions and omissions as described above.

12th. We believe that sincere repentance and earnest prayer, are the means of his reconciliation with the Father. Repentance is the awakening of *love*, *faith* is the maturity thereof, and *regeneration* is the result.

13th. By regeneration we mean the ultimate establishment of harmony of man's will with the law of righteousness in his nature and the suppression of his sinful will.

14th. By prayer we understand that loving, trustful and expectant attitude, which the soul naturally assumes towards God, when it feels itself weak and fainting in its struggles after spiritual progress.

15th. We believe that the prayer or *aspiration* of man, by a universal spiritual law, is met by the *inspiration* of God, or infusion of Divine energy into his soul, giving him strength, purity and peace, which help him towards his spiritual progress,—and that the action of this divine grace is proportionate to the *intensity of the prayer* and *thoroughness of the submission* of the soul. This Divine inspiration, according to peculiarly intense longings and aspirations, at

times assumes the shape of special manifestations, in the case of individuals and nations, as illustrated in the lives of greatmen and great races.

16th. We do not look upon the world as a delusion like the pantheist, nor as a place of bondage like the believer in transmigration, nor as the heritage of fallen humanity and consequently an abode of sin and suffering, like the orthodox Christian, but we believe that the world is a nursery for the soul, beautifully adapted for its growth and development, and for the exercise and culture of its moral and spiritual powers during the first stage of its existence; and that all the spiritual and moral ties that bind man to his family, and to his kind, are sacred and divinely ordained.

17th. In accordance with our views of God, man, and the world, we believe that true piety does not consist in quietism and mysticism, nor in outward ceremonies and asceticism, but in the strict purity of inward and outward conduct, in the sanctification of the relations of life, in the combination and harmony of faith and work, of communion and prayer, and of love and philanthropy.

18th. We believe in public worship, first as a necessity for our individual spiritual progress, secondly, as a duty for the spiritual realization of the brotherhood of man.

19th. We look upon caste and every other form of denial of social or individual rights, by individuals or classes, as impious and reprehensible, and as such a proper field of unceasing moral warfare for all true lovers of God.

20th. In accordance with the above spirit we look upon the Church as essentially a family of brothers and sisters, and as such a common-wealth in the strictest sense of the term; where the abuse or misappropriation of power by one or a few, is unfair, ungodly and condemnable.

21st. We do not believe in any divinely revealed book, nor in any infallible guide or Pope; but we regard all perceptions of the really true, good, and holy, in any book or man as revelations of God, and reverentially bow before them.

22nd. We believe that religion is progressive; that all the religions of the world represent more or less rude and imperfect attempts to spell out the common religious instincts and spiritual inspirations of mankind; that they have not been *made* but have *grown* out of the spiritual life of man, assuming different forms owing to difference of intellectual, moral, social, and political conditions. So there are truths in all and we cheerfully accept them.

23rd. In accordance with these views, we regard the whole human race, as a family, of which God is the Father, the world the abode, the Greatmen the elder brethren, the scriptures of all nations the depositories of spiritual treasure, and the triumph of truth, love, and justice the ultimate goal.

Enough has been said I believe about our views and principles to permanently silence such remarks as the following.

“Let those who disbelieve in providence and inspiration repent sincerely, and abjure their scepticism and their deadly errors, and then but not till then, will it be possible to restore the secessionists (meaning the Sadharan Brahmō Samāj party) to the orthodox Church.” (meaning Mr. Sen’s Church)—Vide Letter to Mr. Tyssen. *Sunday Mirror* October 9th 1881.

Or an opinion like the one shadowed forth in the following words of Mr. Sen :—

“They look grave and devout, they are Brahmōs and Deists, they have learnt to close their eyes during prayer. But when you draw them out in conversation you hear these pious infidels break forth in language such as this—“Christ was a cut-throat and an impostor; Chaitanya was a dirty mendicant, he who claims inspiration is a fool and a humbug, asceticism is only a devise of cunning

priests, God, is an abstract force, and can have no Providence and can never answer prayers."—*New Dispensation* May 5th 1881.)

It is an insult going very deep to our hearts to class us with infidels, sceptics, rationalists and deists. These cruel charges have been reiterated in the face of our earnest and sometimes indignant protests; and in our despair we have simply to pray, that God may yet open the eyes of our *New Dispensation* friends to the unusual degree of spiritual pride they are daily developing by their practice of asceticism, and their fatal tendency towards formal and ceremonial religion.

As regards the mission of Brahmoism and the Brahmo Samāj, our views are quite clear and definite. As far as this country is concerned, the mission of the Brahmo Samāj is six-fold.

First, To preach and propagate the idea of a personal God—the *Parama Purusha*, as in Sanskrit He is called, of a God who loves righteousness and hates sin.

Secondly, To preach and propagate and also to teach by personal example the idea of true spiritual worship—consisting of communion and prayer, as distinguished from the outward observance of idolatrous rites; which idea if once properly grasped will inevitably give rise to spiritual struggles.

Thirdly, To divest conceptions of piety of the errors of sentimentalism and mysticism on the one hand, and asceticism and ritualism on the other; and thereby to direct the religious enthusiasm of the people to channels of practical usefulness, to fields of active philanthropy, and to the elevation of individual and social life.

Fourthly, To seek and establish the grand but often forgotten truth of the brotherhood of man, by the overthrow of caste, and every other form of tyranny of class over class;—the elevation and emancipation of woman being an important step in this direction.

Fifthly, To promote freedom of conscience, to kindle the sense of individual independence; thereby sowing the seeds of domestic, social, political and spiritual liberty.

Sixthly, To communicate to the body of the people, through the means of individual lives, a living and conquering moral energy, born of faith and earnest work, which will impart strength and vigour to the exhausted moral and spiritual nerves of the race, and will help them to be morally and spiritually regenerated.

The vast importance of the above-mentioned six-fold mission of the Brahmo Samáj will be fully realized, when we take into consideration all the erroneous notions of God and piety that are prevalent in this country. As regards the nature of God, we find a group of incongruous conceptions, ranging between the subtle pantheism of the Vedant, on the one hand, and the grossest forms of idolatry or fetish-worship on the other. There seem to be no clearly defined lines distinguishing one of these from another. Drive an intelligent idolater and he at once takes shelter under the prevalent ideas of pantheism. Similarly descend from the philosophic to the practical, and you find the subtle pantheist settling down in some form of idolatry. Thus is the necessity of a clear conception on this all-important subject avoided, and the result is, that religion as an elevating influence on individual life is seldom felt or realized. Side by side with these mistaken notions of God, there are mistaken notions of piety as well. Religion to the quiet-loving, contemplative, and sentimental Hindu, is a thing more pertaining to the sentimental and imaginative side of his nature, than to the practical. To be carried on the wings of imagination to a subjective state of bliss, or to be steeped in the elysian joy of a mystic conception, is his highest ideal. Give him a mystical idea or doctrine, tallying well with his sentimental and imaginative propensities, and his mind will desperately linger about it, as hovereth a butterfly around a flower. The

indications of this tendency are to be found in the *deification of sentiment, in the shunning of active philanthropy, in the depreciation of social reform, and in the neglect of purity and rectitude in private conduct.* And in those cases where it is not pure mysticism, this religious spirit generally manifests itself in asceticism or in idle and lifeless forms and ceremonies. In any case it is religion conceived as a thing apart from the ordinary life of man. It is the mission of the Sadharan Brahmo Samáj, as has already been stated to check both these tendencies. The only cure of mysticism is earnest action or *active philanthropy*; and the best antidote to asceticism or ritualism is the *sanctification of the relations of life*, and these two the Sadharan Brahmo Samáj will follow as principles of action for the future.

But in doing so, it will mainly depend upon its moral and spiritual life, as the chief resource, for it is *life and not theology*, which ultimately saves a nation.

Then as to the mission of the Brahmo Samáj as regards the world at large, the notions of the members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samáj are equally clear. It is to present to the civilized world, a faith characterized by four remarkable features;—(1) First, its *immediacy*—freedom from all doctrines of mediation or intercession; (2) secondly, its *independence* or freedom from the fetters of infallible books or men; (3) thirdly, its *catholicity*—or its broad sympathy for all truth wherever found, and its warm appreciation of the great and good of every land,—(4) Fourthly, its *spirituality*, or freedom from all external forms and ceremonies.

These four leading features form the chief glory of theism as far as we have understood it. It will be seen that almost none of the existing creeds, is altogether free from one or other of the blemishes against which these four features are a sort of protest. It is owing to these

defects about their character, that they have failed to effect complete liberation of the soul of man; rather they have often clogged the wheel of human progress. Now with the advent of a new era in human thought, the widest cultivation of science and the rapidly growing intellectual intercourse of the races, there are quite other aspirations kindled in the human breast. God comes to us now, more than ever before, as the Father of the whole Human Family—and we want a tabernacle, where we can all join, the North and the South, the East and the West, in worshipping Him as our common Father; where we shall shake off the sectarianism and narrowness of ages, and give and receive the good things we mutually possess. This is a grand idea, towards the realization of which it is the mission of the Brahmo Samâj to bend its endeavours.

With a view to carry out the above mentioned mission, and also to promote their own spiritual culture, the members of this Samaj, have brought into existence, many institutions of a spiritual character. In the first place, they have appointed a number of missionaries, who go out visiting different parts of the country, strengthening the faith of the provincial Samajes, scattered all over the land, preaching the principles of theism far and wide, and attracting new members to the Samaj. Besides visiting the majority of the Bengal Samajes, which number upwards of 80, they have been preaching, the truths of Brahmoism, during the last three years, in the Provinces of Assam, Orissa, Behar, N. W. Provinces, Central Provinces, Punjab, Scinde, Bombay, Guzerat, Madras, and Mysore, a collective area covering several thousand miles of land. The system of appointing and supporting these missionaries will be noticed under the head of "Constitutional." The only facts worthy of record here, are,—first, that the present missionaries of the Sadharan Brahmo Samâj are four in number. Three of whom have no other secular employment,

and the other is a lay-missionary, who though still earning his bread by his secular work, does yet devote all his extra time to preach and propagate the principles of Brahmoism by various means. One of the three unsecular missionaries is Pandit Bijay Krishna Goswami, whose sincerity and love of truth have become proverbial in the Brahmo Samaj; who joined the Brahmo Samaj with Mr. Sen, if not earlier, and was the first to respond to the call for missionaries. He was one of the first, if not the first, who discarded caste publicly. He zealously served under the Adi Brahmo Samaj, as long as he found that Samaj upholding what he considered proper principles, but left it and led the army of the first seceders along with Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, the moment he found the Parent Samaj kicking at truth and retracing its steps. Since the days of his connection with Mr. Sen's party he has made almost super-human exertions in the cause of reform, till he has permanently injured his health. He was the first to raise the standard of revolt against the objectionable practices of some of his brother-missionaries and fellow-religionists, noticed under the head of the man-worship movement;—but he was also the first, soon afterwards, to return to Mr. Sen, when the cloud of suspicion that hung around him had been dispelled. He was also one of the first who subsequently raised their voices against the conduct of Mr. Sen in connection with the marriage of his daughter. He has since that time lent his valuable services to the cause of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, and is helping in building the Church of God, as he once did materially help Mr. Sen after the first schism. This man's name has become a house-hold word in the districts of Eastern Bengal, and acts as a spell to awaken the drooping spirit of many a Brahmo heart. Good taste, if not any other reason, should have prevented me from speaking so highly of one of my fellow-workers, and one belonging to my party;

but duty impels me to say these things in favor of a man, who has done so much for our Church, and who for his ignorance of English and his modest self-forgetfulness has no chance of defending himself against the strictures of the *Sunday Mirror*, where he has been often represented during the last three years, as a worthless person, a man of no consequence and whose secession from Mr. Sen is not at all significant. Alas, what a terrible injustice is this! So I hope the indulgent reader will excuse this little playing the part of a member of a Mutual Admiration Society by me.

Secondly, they have opened a large Prayer Hall, in a central part of the city of Calcutta, where upwards of 500 people weekly congregate for purposes of Divine worship. The following was the declaration of our principles, read in three languages, on the occasion of the consecration of this Prayer Hall in January last.

"This day the 10th day of Magh 1287, according to the Bengali era, and the 22nd of January 1881, according to the Christian era, in the fifty-first year of the Brahmo Samaj, we dedicate this hall to the worship of the one true God. From this day its doors shall be open to all classes of people without distinction of caste or social position. Men or women, old or young, wise or ignorant, rich or poor, all classes will meet here as brethren to worship Him, who is the author of our salvation. Excepting this most Holy Being no created being, or thing shall be worshipped here; nor shall divine honors be paid to any man, or woman as God, or equal to God, or an incarnation of God, or as specially appointed by God. It shall be ever borne in mind in this hall, that the great mission of Brahmoism is to promote spiritual freedom amongst men and to enable them to establish direct relationship with God, and the sermons, discourses and prayers of this place shall be so moulded as to help that spirit. It shall ever be its aim and endeavour to enable all who hunger after righteousness to know God, who is life of our life, and to worship him direct.

The catholicity of Brahmoism shall also be preserved here. No book or man shall ever be acknowledged as infallible and the only way to salvation; but nevertheless due respect shall be paid to all

scriptures and the good and great of all ages and all countries. In the sermons, discourses and prayers used in this hall, no scripture, or sect or founder of a sect shall ever be ridiculed, reviled or spoken contemptuously. With due respect untruth shall be exposed and truth vindicated. No man or class of men shall be here regarded as the elect or favourite of God and the rest of mankind as lost to that favour. Any thing calculated to compromise this catholic spirit shall never be countenanced.

The spirituality of our doctrine shall be carefully maintained. Flowers, spices, burnt offerings, candles, and other material accompaniments of worship shall never be used, and care shall be taken to avoid every thing tending to reduce religion to mere parade and lifeless forms.

It shall be the object of all our preachings and discourses in this place to teach men and women, to love God, to seek piety, to hate sin, to grow in devotion and spirituality, to promote purity amongst men and women, to uproot all social evils, and to encourage virtuous deeds. Any thing that will directly or indirectly encourage idolatry, engender superstition, rob spiritual freedom, lower conscience, or corrupt morals, shall never be countenanced. May this hall ever remain a refuge and resting place for all the weary sojourners of this world. May the sinner find consolation and hope in this Hall; may the weak be strengthened and may all who hunger and thirst find food and drink for their souls. With this hope and prayer we dedicate this Hall in the name of the one true God. May He help and guide us. Amen."

Thirdly, they have organised a society for mutual spiritual culture, which still passes by the name of the *Sungat Sabha*, a name previously given by Maharshi D. N. Tagore to a society established by the progressive Brahmos, as already referred to, and which holds its sittings once or twice a week and discusses most important questions connected with the lives and individual spiritual experiences of the members. It partly resembles the class-meetings of the Methodists, and does very good service by keeping up a spirit of earnest inquiry into the spiritual needs of the soul; — though it must be here acknowledged that the value of this institution has not yet been so largely appreciated as one

could wish for. As a general rule, only a limited number of people attend its meetings and carry on its proceedings in a friendly, conversational and informal manner. This Society has not been organised by the Executive Committee of the Sadharan Brahma Samaj but is carried on by its leading members.

Fourthly, they have started one weekly English Journal, *Brahmo Public opinion* and one bi-monthly Bengali Journal, the *Tutwakaumudi*, for the dissemination of their principles, and have also published a number of books and tracts on such subjects as "The Efficacy and Reasonableness of Prayer." "The Immortality of the Soul" "Caste." "Religion in domestic life." "How to cultivate communion with God" &c.

Fifthly, they have organised a most useful institution for the moral and spiritual education of the rising generation of students; where discourses on religious, social, and moral subjects are regularly delivered every Sunday morning. This Society called the "Students' Weekly Service," was first organised by a number of prominent members of the Samaj, in Calcutta, in 1879. Its plan of work is,—short Divine Service with the delivery of a discourse on any moral, social or religious subject. Many of these discourses have been since published. Its meetings are generally attended by the grown-up students of our Colleges. It commenced with 30 or 40 members, but God has blessed the institution to increase its attraction and usefulness—and the number of regular members now exceeds 150, besides a large number of visitors who have not enlisted themselves.

Sixthly, they hold several other prayer-meetings during the week, intended for the special spiritual culture of different classes of the community. The Brahma Ladies, for instance, have a society of their own, which meets for divine service every alternate Saturday; the Brahma boys

of our schools hold a weekly prayer-meeting, where moral and spiritual instruction suited to their age and capacity, is given by the ministers and missionaries of the Samaj who are every now and then invited to preside; and a small number of leading members also daily meet in a central place, in the evening, to close the day after their hard work with short prayer and hymn. All of these institutions have not been constitutionally organised by the Executive Committee of the Samaj, but they are carried on by the members and properly form parts of the spiritual work of the Samaj.

Thus is the spiritual work of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj under the guidance of Providence silently progressing. The progress up to this time achieved, is yet far from being what it should be, or what its earnest well-wishers should like to see; but these individual and collective efforts, as the candid reader will surely own, clearly indicate an amount of earnest striving and spiritual thirst that cannot fail to meet with Divine response. The spiritual development of the Samaj is yet largely in the hands of the future, and He, who takes care of the birds in the air and of the lilies in the field, who feeds the young ones of the raven, and deals out the seasons with their manifold provisions, who smiles propitiously over our lisping in prayer and comes to the rescue of the child in his moments of need—He, it is my solemn faith, will surely bless these earnest efforts. May we only be worthy of His blessings.

Constitutional.—The constitution of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj works by four popularly appointed means. 1st, a body of office-bearers, four in number; second, an executive Committee annually consisting of 12 gentlemen many of whom are men of long standing in the Brahmo Samaj elected by the General Committee;—third, a General Committee consisting of forty annually elected members and

a number of representatives returned by the Mofussil Samajes, who meet every quarter and keep an active control over the work of the Executive Committee; fourth, the general body of members who meet once every year and oftener, if need there be, to receive the annual report, to appoint the office-bearers and the General Committee to alter or modify rules, and to discuss such other questions as they think necessary for the welfare of the body at large. The only facts worthy of mention in this connection are;—first, that the present President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, is an esteemed old Brahmo nearly 70 years in age. He joined the Brahmo Samaj from the days of its foundation by Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, and has ever since been connected with the movement, and has all a long rendered eminent service to its cause, by the exemplary purity and regularity of his private *life*, his active co-operation with every work of reform, and his pecuniary and other helps towards the propagation of its views. The secretary of our Samaj is also a person long known and admired in the Brahmo Samaj for his piety, and exemplary goodness of character. He also occupied a prominent position under Mr. Sen before the last schism. It was he who started the first vernacular monthly journal for females some fifteen or sixteen years ago, which he is still conducting and which during the period of its existence has helped in instilling sound moral and religious principles in many female minds. Let the reader also excuse this little eulogy bestowed on two eminently worthy persons whom the present writer deeply venerates;—for it is necessary for giving a proper idea of the character of the movement.

The following rather important particulars are also placed before the reader for his information.

The conditions of eligibility to membership. The conditions of eligibility to membership of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj are four. First, the applicant for member-

ship, must be above 18 years in age; (2) secondly, he must agree to sign the covenant of the Samaj containing the four principles, mentioned before; (3) thirdly, his private character must be pure and moral, for breach of morality in private life makes a member liable to forfeiture of membership; (4) fourthly, he must agree to pay at least 8 Annas in the year towards carrying on the work of the Samaj.

Special Restrictions. None but *anusthanic* Brahmos i. e. Brahmos who have entirely discarded idolatry and caste in their private lives, can be office-bearers, ministers, missionaries, or members of the Executive Committee of the Samaj.

Relationship with other Samâjes.—The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj recognizes two modes of co-operation—(1) *Representation* (2) *Affiliation*. In the first place any Samaj willing to co-operate with the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, may do so by the appointment of one of their number, as a representative; who will be thereupon accepted as a member of the General Committee of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. But he must be himself a member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. After his return as a representative the quarterly draft report of the Executive Committee, and every other matter fit for the information of members of the General Committee will be sent to him as to other members of the Committee, with a view to obtain through him the views and suggestions of his Samâj. Thus an actual living correspondence is established between the different members of the spiritual body—a thing unknown before. The representative Samajes are left entirely free as regards their internal management, the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj having nothing to do with it. The relationship with the affiliated Samajes is a little closer. Their claims on the attention of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, and on the services of its missionaries stand first. They also by the rules

are left free as regards their internal management, with slight restrictions, as regards the appointment of ministers &c.

I think I should not omit to state here that the relationships contemplated in the rules have not been yet fully worked out, the attention of the Samaj having been occupied during the last three years of its existence, with other more pressing questions.

The system of appointment and support of Missionaries

—A candidate for election as a missionary has first to apply to the Executive Committee. The Committee if it thinks necessary may ask him to submit to preparatory training for a year or two. In that case he is placed under another Committee called the Mission Committee, who have the direct charge of training missionaries. This Committee appoints books, organises lectures, holds examinations and keeps an eye over the progress and conduct of the candidate. If after one or two years, the candidate succeeds in obtaining a certificate from the Mission Committee, he is allowed to go out preaching to different places for one year as a probationer. During this period as well as during the period of tuition, the Executive Committee may, if it thinks fit, fix monthly or other allowances, for his maintenance. After the expiration of the year of trial, if his preachings and conduct are found to be satisfactory, his name will be published for two months, in the public journals of the Samâj, as a candidate for election, with a view to give an opportunity to individual members and Samajes, to bring to the notice of the Committee, any serious objections they might have against his ordination. After full time has been given, and all complaints have been enquired into, the missionary is elected and then a day is appointed when special divine service is held, and he is duly ordained.

I should not also omit to tell the reader that the plan sketched out in the above account, is yet in a state of design,

for the first Missionaries of the Samáj being men of long-standing reputation, no such process was felt necessary in their case. The rules are intended for future candidates; one of whom is already undergoing training as a missionary.

The missionaries of the Sadharan Brahmo Samáj are not paid according to salaries or according to their merits or ability. If any of them stays in Calcutta, a member of the Executive Committee is generally appointed by the Committee, to form and submit an estimate of the probable cost of maintaining his family in comfort in the metropolis. The estimate is formed after consultation with the wife of the missionary. On receipt of this estimate, the Executive Committee fixes a monthly allowance to that amount for the maintenance of his family, subject to occasional augmentation on account of disease, accident or death. As a general rule, the actual superintendence of the missionary's family, and of the education of his children is left in the hands of one or two members of the Executive Committee, who gladly undertake this brotherly duty; for the missionaries, as a general rule, are absent from the head-quarters, during a greater portion of the year. In the case where a missionary settles down for a pretty long time in some mofussil station, the Executive Committee by letters appoints some one from amongst the local members, to discharge the duties of a manager and superintendent of his family, agreeing to make up the deficiency of local contributions;—the principle always kept in view being to leave the missionary as far as possible unhampered by cares and anxieties about the management of his family expenses. In doing his duty, in choosing his sphere of operations, in selecting his means, in regulating his visits, the missionary is left entirely free to follow his conscience subject to a general supervision of the Committee.

Practical Work—Of the practical work of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj six things require to be mentioned.

The first is the construction of the Prayer-Hall, the opening ceremony of which has already been noticed. From the day of our secession, very great difficulty was experienced in finding out a hall sufficiently commodious to contain the large numbers who flocked to our services. For sometime the services were held at the houses of private gentlemen, who kindly placed their halls at our disposal on Sunday evenings. Efforts were within a short time begun to collect funds for the construction of a Prayer-Hall; and Providence has blessed our efforts beyond expectation. Several thousand Rupees were subscribed within a few months and the foundation of the Hall was laid in January 1879,—only eight months after the schism. Nearly 30,000 Rupees have been subscribed since that time, and a large and commodious Hall has been constructed and opened for public worship. The Hall is situated in a central part of the Town of Calcutta, and can accommodate, between 1,000 to 1,200 people.

The second practical work in connection with the Samaj, has been, the creation of a Library, where a large number of religious, theological, historical and biographical books have been collected for the benefit of the members, in Calcutta. It is also fit to notice here with gratitude, that many Christian friends, both in India and England, have liberally contributed, by presentation of books and otherwise, towards the formation of this most useful institution. Let it be known to these donors, that this library is actually doing its useful work by promoting thoughtful and studious habits amongst the members of the Samaj.

The third thing under this head, is the organisation of the *Hita-sadhini Sabha*—something like a Theistic Philanthropic Society. The members of this society, all earnest members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, have undertaken various kinds of philanthropic work—such as promoting the education and moral instruction of the working classes,

raising of funds for aiding poor and indigent students &c. The progress made by this organisation up to this time is not much, because it is of recent origin, and has not yet been able to attract many co-workers, but will in the future, be an important means of doing much useful work. The members of this society have opened a night school for working men. They regularly visit the houses of many of the working-men and impart much intellectual and moral instruction. They are also helping some poor students.

Then comes the work of the members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj amongst women. They have firmly grasped, as I have already said, the principle, that the purity and happiness of our social life, mainly depend on the elevation and emancipation of woman. Being firmly persuaded of the truth of this principle, they have earnestly bent their efforts in this direction. Chiefly through their active support, a Boarding School for girls, in connection with the Government girl school in Calcutta, has been opened and is being maintained, where girls, most of whom are the daughters of the members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, are being trained up in all the higher branches of literature and science, which form subjects of examination under the University. One of our girls successfully competed with the boys, in the First Arts examination and is studying for the B. A.; whilst some of them have successfully passed the Matriculation Examination, and are preparing for the F. A. Not that their guardians attach any special value to the University degrees, or to the sort of education given in our colleges, but they think that the fact of the girls winning these honors for a number of years, will give a great stimulus to the cause of Female Education in Bengal.

Besides the above arrangements for the education of our girls there is a Ladies' Association, organised with a

view to draw the ladies gradually into society, and to teach them to sympathise with topics of general and national interest. Evening parties and social gatherings are frequently held under the auspices of this Association, where both the sexes freely meet,—a thing quite unknown in the present state of Hindu Society,—but the want of which, I am strongly of opinion, is one of the principal causes, if not *the* cause, of the wide-spread social impurity, which has become a stigma on our national life.

After this, the work of a party of junior members of the Samaj requires a little notice. These young men have opened a Sunday School in a central part of the City of Calcutta, where they gather a number of children every Sunday afternoon, and impart to them moral and religious instruction. They are also conducting a little weekly journal in Bengali, for the religious instruction of the boys of our schools.

The last thing that I shall mention in this connection is the City College,—one of the first class educational institutions of Calcutta. It was started in the beginning of the year 1879, by Mr. A. M. Bose, lately the President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, and a few other leading members. It was formerly a higher class English school, but has within the period of two years, risen into a College, for training up boys for the higher examinations of the University. This educational institution has served to keep together a number of Brahmo teachers, all of whom are earnest members of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and most of whom are zealous co-workers in its cause. It also promises to give us a band of earnest-minded young men, trained up to habits of honesty and piety. May Heaven bless our efforts.

Blessings—Let me finish this short account of our faith and work by recounting some of the blessings the Sadharan Samaj has bestowed upon us. It has strengthened our love of truth; it has created respect for principles; it has

fostered a spirit of independence; it has taught us to respect the opinions of others; it has strengthened our sense of duty; it has taught many men and women to take active interest in the welfare of their Church; it has opened a sphere of usefulness to a large number of men and women in the community; it has brought the different Churches nearer to each other, by a process of active correspondence; it has successfully vindicated the purity of Brahmoism; and it has introduced a form of government which will train up the members in governing the affairs of their own Church. But what, I consider to be its chief blessings are,—the type of piety it is silently developing,—and the impetus it has given to the spirit of earnest work. It has increased the number of practical Brahmors who have come forward to wholly discard idolatry and caste. May God yet bless its exertions in the future.

Appeal—In conclusion I have to appeal to our friends of the New Dispensation, for treating us with greater forbearance, for giving up the cruel practice of calling us “infidels,” “sceptics” “rationalists” and far worse names, and for shunning the far more painful tactics of stabbing us in the dark. Certainly the fault is not ours, if they find themselves deserted and forsaken, and feel their power crumbling away; for that seems to be the inevitable fate, which is sure to overtake all enemies of human freedom, in these days of enlightenment and progress. Let them see that they have embraced error and consequently are spurned by truth. They know it well and let me confess it candidly, we have as yet very little to attract people to our fold, if then they find our cause prospering and gaining ground, it is not because of any virtue or excellence in us, but owing to the soundness of the principles we profess. In spite of our many imperfections we must succeed, for ours is the cause of human freedom, the cause of India’s social and moral regeneration. He who has permitted our feeble hands

to hold aloft the banner of His truth, will yet lead us through all our imperfections, for we seek His glory and not man's. Be sure, neither your frowns nor the filth and dirt you throw at us, will scare us away from the principles, upon which we have fixed our eyes. We are determined to give them a trial and stand by them, whence no voice of man can make us swerve. So brethren it is a profitless task to slander and revile and try to damage our cause. Why should you be so nervous? If our cause is not of God, it shall surely perish; but, on the other hand if it is truth that inspires us and not malice, we stand like adamant. Be not afraid; if we are really sceptics and infidels as you represent us to be, we cannot prevail against your cause; for it is *faith* and not *infidelity* that will move the world. Give up the cruel practice then, of slandering and insinuating,—that most disgraceful business of little minds. Come to the arena of public discussion, mercilessly criticise our views, try to prove the fallacy of our doctrines, we claim no divine infallibility and we shall hear and judge; but spare, Oh spare, I beseech you in the name of the Common Father, whom you still adore, those cruel wounds that are inflicted in the dark and that baffle the arts of healing for their very vagueness. I also appeal to the general public, and specially to that section of the European public, in India, and England, who take interest in the Brahmo Samaj movement, to give us an impartial and fair hearing, and to bear in mind that whoever talks loudest in the world's quarrels, is not necessarily the truest in his cause. We do not crave their favour or patronage, but we demand simple justice. Let them not practically illustrate the saying:—that the *world* is always on the side of long-established and dashing *error*. Let them judge us by our principles and then let them wait to see what fruits they bear in future. For faith gives us the assurance, that in this Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, God has once more rallied together the band of his

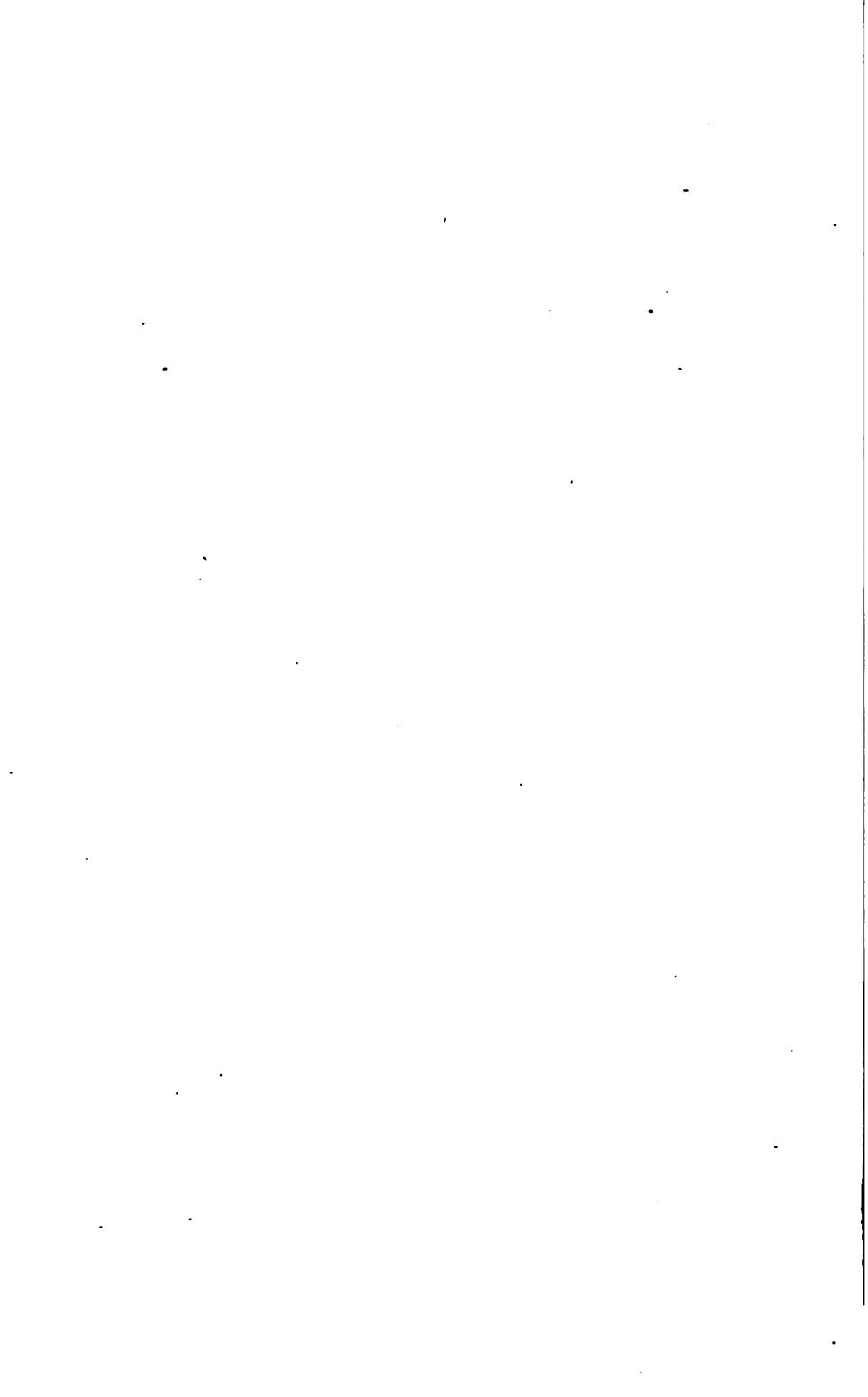
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faithful servants, who will do the great battle of Indian regeneration, in the future.

Nor can I close this narrative without some words of brotherly advice to the members of the Sâdhâran Brahmô Samaj. Brethren, we have not yet sufficiently learnt, the two great primary lessons—(1) *love God*; and (2) *love each other*. Herein lies the root of all moral and spiritual progress for ourselves and our country. The more we live these truths the greater will be our real usefulness to this land. Shake off all ascetic and ritualistic notions of piety, which have unfortunately found acceptance with many minds, seek that piety which will bring the sunshine of purity and peace to our homes, the reign of truth, love and justice to society, and relief to the sufferings of those who are heavy-laden with sin and misery in this world. Let us learn to treat the abuses of those who would call us rationalists, and sceptics on that account, with that indifference, with which men of conviction always treat the opposition of *error*. Be honest, be earnest, but above all be *men*,—strong in intellect and character, and bent upon doing the right thing in the right way. India needs just such a training. Of *mysticism* and *sentimentalism* she has had enough. She needs the muscle and nerve of true piety to make her a worthy and regenerate country. This piety the Brahmô Samâj will give her. May God so bless our Prayers.

A Prayer.—I thank thee Oh Almighty God, that thou hast enabled us to know truth, to love it with our heart and to humbly try to follow it in practice. I thank thee that in spite of our unworthiness and imperfections, thou hast permitted us to try to do something for the furtherance of thy cause. I thank thee O Father, that through thy exceeding mercy, the light of true faith is spreading over this country and the hope of her final regeneration is enkindled in our mind. I thank thee that thou hast taught us to

aspire after submission to thy will, to be thy useful and faithful servants. May that spirit abide in us for ever. May we ever seek thy glory, in whatever we do for thy Church. Teach us humility, teach us humble reliance on thee. Lead us and our country, in the path of true piety, —teach us that true worship, which brings the soul nearer to thee, and graciously impart to us that life of righteousness which will give us purity in private conduct, sanctity in all the relations of life, and active energy for doing good to thy children. Bless our wives and children that they may know truth and follow thee. Bless every form of work we have humbly undertaken. Lift O Lord! the weight from the lot of woman in India. Enable thy daughters, O Father, to fulfil their destiny on Earth. Liberate them from that ignorance and slavery, to which cruel custom has doomed them, and make us worthy of helping in this work. May thy grace help us in all our struggles, and may thy true Kingdom be established, in our hearts, in our families, and in our land. Glory be to thee Almighty Lord, thy mercy alone availeth.



1903

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THE
NEW DISPENSATION
AND THE
SĀDHĀRAN BRĀHMO SAMĀJ

BY
PANDIT SIVANĀTH SĀSTRĪ, M.A.
MISSIONARY, SĀDHĀRAN BRĀHMO SAMĀJ.

—◆—
"Satyam eva Jayate."
Truth alone triumphs.
"Brahma kripahi kevalam."
God's mercy alone availeth.



—◆—
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